



VICTORY THROUGH AFRICA

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VICTORY THROUGH AFRICA

Chapter One

The American Invasion of Africa

IN THE early dawn of Sunday, November 8, 1942, the United States surprised the world with an attack on French North Africa. The American troops arrived for the assault from secret meeting places in the Atlantic on an Anglo-American Armada of 850 ships, the greatest convoy ever assembled for offensive operations.

The attack was set for three o'clock in the morning, one hour earlier than the favored zero hour of Napoleon. Within a short time after the Americans landed, vast Vichy-controlled territories of North Africa had capitulated, one after the other, throwing in their lot with the United Nations. The Americans had come with all the weapons of modern warfare and in full possession of all its tricks. All they needed now to win was actual battle practice. From open-faced landing barges the Stars and Stripes were quickly implanted on African beachheads; tanks broke up sun-baked fortresses until resistance fluttered out; parachute troops closed in on airports and from the sea Anglo-American naval forces silenced ships and batteries ordered to fight by German-dominated Vichy.

The surrender of French North Africa almost to Tunis and Bizerte (where Nazis and Italians were heavily dug in), was due to the valor and skill of the Anglo-American forces as a whole. But it should be noted here as well that there were other powerful, though secret forces, which paved the way for invasion. The Americans had taken advantage of some well-known and obvious Nazi tactics, for the comparatively easy conquest of French North Africa was the result of long range preparations. As an American newspaper correspondent, I watched these developments for more than a year and by the force of events became something more than an interested spectator.

What might be termed the real invasion of French North Africa started in November 1940, when Secretary of State Hull convinced President Roosevelt that, as Americans, we should cultivate the friendship of the French in North Africa. Both Hull and Roosevelt held that for this important work our embassy should be scrupulously maintained in that despised capital of Vichy. It was argued rightly that by retaining "good" relations with the Vichy government and the Chief of State, Marshal Petain, the government of the United States was able to maintain consulates in French North Africa and at the same time keep on in its invaluable listening post at Vichy. And at Vichy we could watch the Germans as well, and the Italians and the Japs—that triple alliance of thugs out to do us in.

The consulates of North Africa therefore became the effective centers of operations from which the "invasion" prepa-

rations were carried out. Certain of the so-called liberals in America, anti-Nazis, Communists, and other outraged but foggy thinkers, were horrified at our continued and unbroken relations with Vichy. They wanted us to quit Vichy and recognize de Gaulle in London; that is, they wanted us to abandon our only foothold in Europe, to abandon loyal French friends, to turn our backs on the war and give everything over to the Germans. But the Administration's policy was thoroughly vindicated here in North Africa.

Until the American army clashed with the Germans in Tunisia, the joint occupation of the vast region from Dakar to Tunis cost the United States less than two thousand casualties, of which fewer than nine hundred were deaths. Had we abandoned Vichy and our North African consulates, we would have had to land in Africa by force alone, without any prearranged reception and probably in the teeth of a German occupation army of trained Afrika-Korps shock troops. The American losses in lives alone would have been counted in thousands instead of hundreds.

It should now be obvious to all Americans that had we not kept the "faith" with Vichy—that is to say, kept our real faith with our real French friends; had we not kept Admiral Leahy in the embassy at Vichy, and had we not remained in our consulates in North Africa, Germany would doubtlessly have moved into Morocco, just to "protect" the French from enslavement. An individual like Laval, with his dreary and barratrous mind, would hardly have protested to his German friends. And Marshal Petain

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would have been a well-meaning but helpless rubber stamp, or even worse, a prisoner of Germany and Laval. One of the last reports I heard of Marshal Petain when I was in North Africa was something he had told one of his lifelong friends. Petain said, "I don't know anything about what goes on here in Vichy. I just sign papers." This elderly friend of Petain said the old man was a tragic figure, no longer himself, and was calmly awaiting the end of his life, to be buried with his soldiers of Verdun.

The United States thus had almost two years of preparation in Africa: one year before we got into the war, and eleven months to the day from the time we were forced into the conflict against the Axis. And finally, having invaded North Africa in November 1942 we were forced to withdraw from Vichy, which made a lot of our good, righteous citizens happy. But Vichy had well served its purpose.

President Roosevelt broadcast in French, to the French, at the time of our landing in Morocco, assuring France of our friendship and our intention to throw out the Germans. He asked the French not to resist. But Marshal Petain gave orders to the contrary. Under strict German dictation, with translation by Laval, Petain ordered Frenchmen to defend their honor. And what a sad, wornout word. The Germans and Italians have made of it a travesty. The misplaced loyalty of a few Vichy officers cost France much more than it cost the United States and in the eyes of the world it cast suspicion not only on their honor but on their intelligence.

Although we were late in occupying North Africa, we probably will never know just how lucky we were to have got established and entrenched in this vital territory before the Germans. The long preparations for our peaceful invasion were carried out by comparatively few persons who worked hand in hand with a friendly and loyal French population and with a rare band of French refugees who had come from France.

As an American correspondent, Frenchmen had never ceased asking me, "When are you Americans coming to North Africa? For God's sake, come before the Germans get here, for if the Nazis arrive first, all will be lost."

And this was long before the United States was in the war. But on December 7, 1941, French friends in Algiers greeted me as a brother, "Now you must come, you Americans. Come to North Africa, but come quickly." That was what I heard on all sides.

I asked if there would be armed resistance. I asked this question, not only of friends, but as one might say, of the man in the street, and the answer was invariably to "come and come quickly." They supposed there would be token resistance by Vichy but that it would be of no importance, once we had arrived with enough men to keep the Germans out. "Bring weapons and guns and tanks," they said. "You Americans will find new allies here."

The predictions of these friendly French were true, as events proved. General Eisenhower had received the sub-

mission of Algiers, Oran, Casablanca, Dakar and Bone in less than seventy-six hours after the first "Yank" landed in Morocco.

A few days afterward, the War Department released the sensational story of Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark's historic secret visit to North Africa, three weeks before the invasion. General Clark, with a few picked officers, arrived from America and England by plane, ship and submarine to an underground rendezvous with loyal French officers and perfected the plans for the American landings. General Clark and his little band got away after some thrilling mishaps and carried the message to Garcia, as it were. In an operation of such magnitude, it was unique for the absolute secrecy that covered it and kept it from the knowledge of the wily Germans. The resistance, stubborn as it was at the hands of a few police-minded officers, had been comparatively easy to break down.

As the American and British commands both knew, the real fight was going to be in Tunisia with the Axis forces entrenched in that African headland and the strongly fortified German foothold about Bizerte. The Americans and the British lost no time going eastward to meet the universal enemy, as the victorious British army was closing in from Tripoli. Moreover, a showdown in Tunisia between the French and Italians had always been considered inevitable.

Benito Mussolini, in his sharp knowledge of men and his ignorance of the world, had hoped to wrest Tunisia from France by bluff and by sheer weight of numbers.

There was always a heavy population of Italians in that French protectorate. Many of them were anti-Fascist refugees from Italy. But in recent years the Italian dictator literally shoveled Italians into Tunisia and with them went the usual Fascist clubs and party paraphernalia following a well-known criminal formula known as penetration. It was much stronger than the usual fifth column force, and it had caused many incipient quarrels between Rome and Paris. Mussolini had publicly and noisily proclaimed Italian demands for annexation of Tunisia, though he never quite dared to demand it officially from France.

But Tunisia became useful to Italy in a way of which the Italian dictator had never dreamed. After the British Eighth Army had taken Cirenaica, Libya and Tripolitania away from Italy as conquered territory, Tunisia was their refuge for remnants of the Italian armies who fled with the Germans under Rommel. Before these broken armies arrived, the French authorities had estimated that among the European population of the protectorate there were fifty-one French to every forty-nine Italians. But in the present circumstances it looks as if Italy's territorial claims will be flung out the window and that the Italians henceforth will adhere strictly to the laws of the French Protectorate. Mussolini could not find a Scipio this time.

In fact, American occupation of North Africa was feared more by the Italians than by the Germans. The Italians knew the French would ally with the Americans to throw them out of Tunisia; the Italians also knew that in the event

of American invasion, the German strategy would be based on Germany's needs and not the position of the lesser member of the Axis. As for the Germans, they had scorned an American landing in Africa—I had it from their own men, that the general staff firmly believed the Americans and British would strike first through France.

In view of these considerations, one can see with what importance the United States regarded the mission of General Maxime Weygand to North Africa early in 1941. The man who, with Foch, had brilliantly beaten the Germans in 1918, who had reorganized the French Army of Occupation in Germany in 1923 (to force the Germans to pay reparations five years after the armistice) and who was war minister of defeated France in 1940 (though he had been called too late) was not going to organize Africa for Germany. Weygand was hardly a collaborationist.

The Weygand Mission was therefore a source of hope for American operations in North Africa. Secretary Hull lost no time in shifting Robert D. Murphy, our chargé d'affaires at Vichy, to Algiers. "Bob" Murphy, who was a career diplomat and a man of conspicuous talent, conducted himself prudently in this spy-infested region. And when Weygand was recalled, it was Murphy with his staff of vice-consuls and his French friends who prepared the way for General Eisenhower. Algiers, it will be remembered, yielded with only the mildest of military resistance. And naturally it had been Murphy and his earnest little group of

special "technicians" who arranged the dramatic meeting for General Clark.

It was not easy to carry on this preparation under the Argus eyes of the Italian Commission and in view of that surly triple-headed Cerberus, representing the Wehrmacht, the Gestapo and the Reichsfuehrer. Both the Italian and the German Commissions reported back the movements and daily activities of everyone seen with or suspected of being seen with the Americans in North Africa. Then there were the Vichy special police who also watched the Americans. I can truthfully say "us Americans" because I was there—I was watched, and I was investigated, my premises were searched, I was interrogated and I was eventually expelled from French territory, not as a correspondent, but according to a statement by Governor General Yves Chatel, because I was the agent of a "third power," obviously Great Britain. That was wholly untrue.

The preparation for the American invasion was not made the subject of a treatise or even put down on paper. It fell within a new category, new in this war, of psychological warfare. And this preparation can best be understood by a narrative of events that took place in French North Africa from the time Secretary Hull decided to "hold on" to Vichy until Bob Murphy was arrested on the day General Eisenhower "took" Algiers. Murphy was released a few hours later to draw up the armistice conditions between the Americans and the French—and incredible as it may seem,

with Admiral Darlan, the recent Vichy Vice-Premier who had been captured in Algiers by the Americans.

The negotiations with the French authorities and the singular political events which followed can be explained in time and in subsequent chapters. Political and military luminaries rose and fell in the French leadership, all of which was indicative of the broken condition of French morale. A nation is not at its best when it has been defeated, then robbed and then starved.

There was an unstable situation as between General Charles de Gaulle, the London leader of the Free French, and General Henri Giraud, who had escaped from a German prison and who was given the French military command under the Americans. Then there was General Catroux in Syria who had negotiated with the British, and General Boisson in Dakar who had submitted to General Eisenhower on orders from Darlan, and there was also that elegant and enigmatic friend of the Sultan of Morocco, General Nogues, French Resident General.

Also in Morocco, in residence at Rabat, on the fringe of all this French political rowing, was the legitimate heir to the French throne, the Count de Paris, with a big family of sons and an heir presumptive. As son of the late Duke de Guise, the Count de Paris asked nothing better than to lead the French people back to honor and greatness—but as a constitutional monarchy.

But there was still vitality left in the French, and it expressed itself in the organization of an important army of

more than 300,000 excellent soldiers. It is in the hearts of that force that a new France is being forged. They leapt almost without arms into the battle of Tunisia. French fliers returned the compliment to America from the first world war and organized a Lafayette Escadrille in Tunisia, this time Frenchmen fighting with Americans. Something gallant, something chivalrous, something full of hope for this world was the result thus far of the landing of the Americans in French North Africa.

The military events in North Africa, important as they are, should not obscure the significance of the continent as a whole. Our control here lays the groundwork for victory *through Africa* not only militarily but economically and politically as well.

I was fortunate enough to have lived for more than a year in Algiers as a foreign correspondent before the American invasion. I had also been assigned to French North Africa in 1930 to cover the Centenary of Algeria, as a Paris correspondent of the United Press, and in 1926 as Rome correspondent of the Philadelphia Public Ledger, I was in Libya with Mussolini viewing the new "Roman Empire." I have spent some years in what the war strategists call the Mediterranean area. As the present war moved through Europe in the first dark years of Axis barbarity, I saw North Africa looming up across the Mediterranean with more vividness and more hope as the strategic battleground on which to outflank Germany and its wretched allies. Later

events have pointed to a still more encompassing role for this huge continent.

Africa together with the Mediterranean is the first great barrier to Axis expansion. The possession by the United Nations of this vast treasure continent is, and must be, the first major defeat of Germany, Italy and Japan as a group. Germany's reverses in Russia meant loss of prestige and oil. The loss of Africa means the loss of the Mediterranean and the Near East.

With America, Britain and their allies firmly established on the African continent, Germany is flung back into impoverished Europe, forced to do battle among people she has enslaved but not conquered; Italy is stripped of her empire, a pathetic and abject traitor to her own past; and Japan, like Germany, must fight on in enclosed areas where she is cordially hated.

It is in the inscrutable silence of this majestic and luminous land that the Nazis' dream of world domination must be shattered and come to an end. Adolf Hitler is no answer to the Sphinx, before which the Nazi leader is but a comic clown, Mussolini a sad nonentity and the Japanese but so many dancing mice.

Even today, certainly to many Americans, Africa is an unknown world. But it is our salvation. In the hollow of its bosom along the Nile, Africa gave us the civilization for which we are now fighting. It is erroneously called the Dark Continent because of some of its inhabitants and its jungles, but it is a land of unquenchable light and from its

own greatness, its richness and power and beauty it may again release its occult gift to a world groaning and groping in renascent barbarism.

Look at Africa on the globe—not merely North Africa, but the great, sprawling continent from north to south. It is an immense world, its clean shores are washed by three oceans. In the south, a shower of diamonds, in the north, the valid knowledge of the ages, and in its entirety, fierce and freedom-loving peoples, many of them deeply religious, living in a tranquillity which hardly knows a changing season. Yet, there are snow and ice and torrent and towering mountains and lunar desert; there are prairies of livestock and seas of golden wheat, peaches, oranges, olives, lemons, dates, figs. There are many fine, modern cities, airports and highways, but withal there are miles of unbuilt railroads and undredged ports, mines and mineral wealth untouched and unexploited. And there is space.

After America, after England, Africa is where the great caravans of freedom are moving. The United Nations must add Africa to the great arsenal-continents of North and South America, and to Asia and Australia.

And then, where is world domination by the Axis? Where are the Nazi dreams of conquest?

For many years, the rest of the world has watched Africa: Germany, Italy, Japan, Britain, France, Spain. And now, America has awakened to its importance. Our armies—and our agricultural experts—are already there.

Chapter Two

Voyage to Algiers

IT WAS a misty, rainy day in Marseilles when I embarked on the *Gouverneur Generale X* of the *Compagnie Generale Transatlantique*, for Algiers. The company name of this little passenger ship—known to us in America as the French Line, was itself a symbol of the disaster which had befallen France. The French Line, one-time owners of such proud ships as the *Normandie*, the *Isle de France*, the *Lafayette* and others, was now reduced to this furtive ferry service between Marseilles and a few North African ports.

These French Line ships, together with a few other packet boats, plied the Mediterranean only by the grace of Germany. From Marseilles they carried to French North Africa only such officials, soldiers and families as the German-controlled Vichy government deemed worthy of visas. The ships of this French Line and other companies brought back from North Africa a similar though less numerous exchange of “worthy” passengers. But something much more important, they carried wheat, vegetables, meat, oils, fruit, phosphates and ores. In Marseilles, these cargoes were transferred from the holds of the ships to waiting

freight cars on the great Joliet docks, and rushed on into Germany. The food products were not for the starving French. Neither were the ores and minerals. France had the honor of owing Germany 400,000,000 francs per day for the German army of occupation, so these slight shiploads of stuff from Africa were simply deducted from France's astronomical debt to Germany. Italy also had a heavy "war" claim on France, but naturally the Nazis are always first in these matters.

That dreary afternoon in March, my ship was awaiting sailing orders in its berth at the modernized piers of the Quai Joliet. Leaning on the rail of the promenade deck I mused on many things. First, I noted that our passengers for North Africa included many women and children, probably belonging to colonial families. Then there was a number of officers and soldiers returning to North African garrisons. There was also a contingent of athletic young Frenchmen belonging to the new Youth Camps, *Les Chantiers de Jeunesse*. Some of these camps had already been established in North Africa. It was one of those Nazi ideas to Germanize France, which the deplorable Vichy government accepted without protest. But thanks to the virility of the young Frenchmen, these Youth Camps did not work out in favor of Germany. The young men began to think, and thinking among the youth is sometimes dangerous. They began hating Hitler.

On the ship I also noticed a number of Arab soldiers travelling in third and fourth class. They too were going

back to their families, thanks to kindly German officials. Most of them had money, and war medals, and good uniforms. They had been prisoners of Germany and after being indoctrinated in Nazi military might and magnanimity, they were given their visas and sent back to Africa—to spread the wonder tale of German victory among the natives, and to relate that millions of Frenchmen were still in bondage.

The passengers walked nervously up and down the decks, impatiently awaiting any sign of departure. Each one had probably spent weeks obtaining the rare “exit visa,” the permission to leave Metropolitan France for a French colony, or, in the case of Algiers, another “department” of France. The request for each visa, from each bona fide Frenchman, required at least three weeks of scrutiny by Vichy officials, by various local Prefects of Police, by informateurs and stool pigeons, spies, agents and assorted functionaries, and finally by the competent authorities of the Gestapo enthroned in France.

In my case, as an American news agency correspondent, I obtained my exit visa from Marseilles and permission to land in Algiers, after only six weeks of waiting. My request was backed by the International News Service, for which I worked at that time, by the Consulate General in Marseilles, by the American Embassy in Vichy and by myself as a resident and accredited correspondent during the war in France. But to the Germans, to allow any human being out of France meant losing track of a possible enemy. The

Gestapo does not take chances. However, had I not procured my visa, I could eventually have got it by going to Vichy and bribing the right Nazi, for despite the Fuehrer's shining example, the Gestapo does do a bit of business on the side.

I doubt if anyone could leave Marseilles without a regret. I had lived and worked there since I had arrived from Bordeaux, just after the fateful Franco-German Armistice was signed. During those golden July days, after the Armistice, Marseilles was a meeting place for the refugee millions of Western Europe. For weeks and weeks, the more fortunate of the refugee crowds had left from Bordeaux, Lisbon or Marseilles. But now Marseilles was closed to Atlantic traffic, and the city was jammed.

The American newspapers thought that in this section of "unoccupied" France, an American correspondent might send out the real news of what was going on after the Armistice, of Germany's moves and France's reactions. So I had had an assignment to Marseilles, of all places, as a foreign correspondent. But it was useless. The censorship was more rigid than at Vichy, despite the fact that most of the censors were personally pro-American. It was impossible to work there under a Vichy government regime. The story of Marshal Petain's gradual absorption by the Nazis is well known. The French press reflected the German D.N.B. from end to end. The German-controlled Paris press was nauseating. My work was a ridiculous travesty, although I cabled thousands of harmless words to America.

Moreover, for many quiet and hopeful Frenchmen, the center of gravity had shifted suddenly to Africa. General Maxime Weygand, war minister at the time of the defeat, who nevertheless did not sign the armistice with Germany, had gone across the Mediterranean and been established as head of a Vichy delegation to direct the affairs of French North Africa, including French West Africa and Dakar. This was the beginning of a long-range strategic move in which the Axis was subsequently outmaneuvered and outflanked. Few could understand why Germany permitted this notoriously anti-German Frenchman to install himself permanently in Africa. Herr Hitler must have been busy trimming his mustache, or deep in his crystal gazing the day he let Weygand go to North Africa. It cost him a continent. With Weygand in Algiers, French North Africa was the obvious place for a newspaperman to be.

And so we, that is, the officers and soldiers, the colonial families, the young men of the Youth Camps, the Arabs and myself, were all going off to a better land in Africa, like so many refugees, so many emigrants, escaping the wretchedness and misery of Europe.

We thought the Gouverneur Generale X would never depart. The French port officials carrying bulging brief cases kept running up and down the gangway. The red tape was interminable. The French were responsible to the Germans in Vichy, and what is worse, to the Gestapo, if any passage involved irregularities, or if there were stow-

aways aboard, or anyone who might eventually join the enemy forces fighting against the Axis.

I leaned against the damp rail and cogitated on all these childish activities that were going on. With so many excited gentlemen running up and down with papers, I verified my own ticket, my upper berth in the cabin for four, my visa on that old red American passport which bore so many French, Belgian, Swiss, Spanish and Portuguese permits and stamps and unreadable signatures bearing witness to the tragedy of Europe. I verified my food tickets and counted my money and tucked my muffler in my raincoat and gazed on these last sights of Marseilles.

Across the dock shed was a French cargo boat from Africa. Swarms of men were unloading it and transferring its sacks of potatoes and produce into freight cars for Germany. For months I had not eaten a whole potato. The French press said the British blockade was starving Europe. British submarines lurking just off the coast, in the Mediterranean and in the Atlantic, were supposed to be "starving" the people of France. Practically no Frenchman believed it. There opposite me was the showdown. The men and women next to me saw it but they did not comment on it. That would have been disloyal to Marshal Petain. Moreover, a Gestapo man on board might have heard their cynical complaint and perhaps noted them down for future "consideration."

Suddenly the running back and forth over the gangway

ceased. The last gentleman with blunt-toed shoes and ill-fitting clothes had departed with his brief case. A seaman started unlashng the gangway. I heard the splash of a long hawser and I knew we were shoving off. The passengers grew animated and even talkative. In this release from long tension, the suppressed Gallic spirit broke through. We moved southward out into the harbor in gay reassurance of life and liberty, a sort of debarkation for Cytheria or the gardens of the Hesperides.

The picturesque buildings that framed the Old Port and the Quartier Isolé of Marseilles grew dim in our view. We did not realize then that these precious landmarks would later be riddled with shot and blasted by Germans in reprisals against the people of Marseilles. We did not know that later more than eleven hundred deserters from the German armies would be found hidden in the dens about the Old Port.

Out of Marseilles one sees as a farewell view the solitary island rock of the Chateau d'If. Looking at this fabled prison of the Count of Monte Cristo, we refugees from France, inmates of occupied towns, prisons and concentration camps, felt a closer bond with Edmond Dantes, and his escape from this cell on the blue Mediterranean. And after that we began thinking about food.

Dinner on board the Gouverneur Generale X was not up to the French Line standard, but it was a feast compared to the meals we had been eating in Marseilles. They did not bother with food tickets. As we reached for second pieces of

bread there were sly looks, though there was plenty. Already the rich abundance of Africa was making itself felt. I remember the menu to this day. We had turbot with sauce Hollandaise, and two vegetables after a thick soup, dessert, oranges and coffee—coffee with sugar, not saccharine. It was not too copiously served, but as we all agreed, a heavy meal would probably have made us all sick (in the English sense of the word) and we were quite bucked up and in high spirits. There was plenty of wine and cigarettes, French cigarettes, as a cigarette butt had not yet become a jealously guarded treasure.

I was seated at a table with several of the French Youth Organization members. They were fine, clean lads. The Vichy administration had provided well-made, substantial uniforms and capes for them, and blue berets. They had insignia somewhat similar to our Boy Scout badges, but they were not Boy Scouts. Almost every one had been in the now disbanded armed forces. They were still having some para-military training. All were intensely inquisitive about America. Before we left, several of the group gave me their addresses in North Africa with earnest invitations to visit them. Walking about the decks toward the end of the voyage, some of these intelligent youths quietly asked me, "When are you Americans coming into the war? You must come through North Africa. You will find friends." This was the first of a long series of similar questions put to me, over more than a year, from this initial voyage to Algiers until my homeward departure, fourteen months later.

Breakfast on the good ship *Gouverneur Generale X* was a new joy. We had real *café au lait*, cup after cup if we wanted it, and on the second day out, well away from rationed France, the bread was piled up, and they still did not ask for bread tickets. Already one felt better in health. The escape from continual scrutiny by the French or German informants was itself a nerve tonic. Unrationed food with a breakfast like those in the old days of Paris was a delight. The lazy life on shipboard was completely relaxing even though we still had not travelled far from the French coast and were headed for Spain.

"It will take at least four days," I was told by an elderly Frenchman who lived in Oran. "They fear the British blockade, so we cross directly at a narrow point probably off Cartagena to Mostanagem. We hug the Spanish coast. Tomorrow we shall see Barcelona."

I agreed this was a roundabout way to cross the Mediterranean to go almost due south to Algiers. My friend was one of the "old school" Frenchmen. I was certain he was not a Vichy collaborationist. He owned a vast domain in the province of Orania. At that moment we happened to be alone in a corner of the dining room. He was fond of fishing and hunting, and he told me of how one hunts in North Africa for gazelles. He was impatient to be home.

Then he said, after a pause, "You are an American. This must seem absurd to you, this British blockade. Coal is short, nevertheless we take a four-day route to cross the Mediterranean, just to write in the newspapers that we must

run the British blockade. Be assured, *mon ami*, we will not see a ship, unless it is another French ship coming back from Africa."

It was obvious my acquaintance was too old, too experienced and too wealthy to worry about being denounced to the Vichy Gestapo. Later in Algeria I was to know many fine old Frenchmen of his type. They had no illusions about Germany and certainly none about collaboration with the Nazis.

Except for aperitif time, the bar of the Gouverneur Generale X usually was deserted. But newspapermen are generally a gregarious lot, and according to legend we are supposed to haunt bars. I did not want to be too conspicuous, so I dropped frequently into the bar for a smoke, away from the stiff west wind, for a drink of Vermouth. It was there I met Chief Sergeant Mejdoub Mohammed, limping on a heavy walking stick, well-uniformed in the khaki of the Army of Africa, and on his left breast the yellow and green ribbon of the Medaille Militaire and alongside it the Croix de Guerre. With the Sergeant was a fine fighter type of Moroccan trooper who also wore the Croix de Guerre.

Sergeant Mejdoub was obviously a Berber, with ashen brown face and keen gray-brown eyes under his red Fez. He was a type who respects and was respected by every good French officer. You felt that he knew both his weapons and his enemy and was not the man to run away. His companion was somewhat like him, but younger. They seemed to be inseparable. At the bar my raincoat sleeve almost

touched his long sweeping *burnous*. We soon became acquainted. Both of these native soldiers spoke good French, and they conversed with utter frankness—in fact, too much frankness, I found out later.

The followers of the Prophet are forbidden alcoholic beverages but my two Mohammedan friends were celebrating a special event. They had been released from a German prison camp and were going home for further treatment of their wounds. The Berber sergeant had no qualms because of Allah. We drank three rounds of aperitifs, each treating the others, whereupon we talked of the war, of Africa and Algiers, and parted the best of friends.

That evening Chief Sergeant Mejdoub engaged me again at the bar. He was interested in my profession as a journalist. I drew him a rough map of the North Atlantic to show him where the United States lay and he was impressed. We had to have another drink—on him. He then told me he had been through Dunkirk and that the French naval commander, Admiral Abrial, who had been taken prisoner by the Germans, was his cellmate. At that time Admiral Abrial happened to be Governor General of Algeria. He was in residence at Algiers, and it was never spoken of him, nor printed in the French press, that he had been set free by the Germans to govern Algeria. Obviously Abrial must be the willing servant of Berlin. To the Germans he was out on probation—a well-known form of Nazi blackmail. The French have a name for this kind of liberty. They call it “Congé d’armistice.”

The chief sergeant laughed as he related this tale. "Governor General Abrial knows me very well," he went on, in a voice somewhat too high. "I brought him his coffee every morning in that awful German prison. At Dunkirk, before we were moved out, I helped Abrial every day. He should refuse me nothing. And when we get to Algiers, I will get you an interview with the Governor General. He *cannot* refuse me." My Berber friend and his companion kept on about Abrial until I felt such frank talk might get them in trouble, so I cautioned them discreetly and made my excuses and went to bed.

The next morning the two native soldiers were again at their place in the bar. They were more than hospitable. The chief sergeant told me he would show me the real Algiers, and that we should have some fine coffee. "I shall be at the Maillot Hospital for a short spell," he said, "then you will know Algiers, before I return to my own village. We shall have some real *cous cous*, like the Arabs eat." I took down his name and I gave him my card. That was the last I ever saw of him.

Chief Sergeant Mejdoub Mohammed had been indiscreet. He not only violated the Koran but he violated the code of Vichy. He had spoken the truth, he had been guilty of transmitting uncensored facts about the Germans and about his old pal and fellow-prisoner, Admiral Abrial. And all this to a newspaperman. The night before, I had noticed a dubious-looking deck officer in the bar, listening to the chief sergeant. He was back at noon, listening again and

looking at all of us with obvious disfavor. I suspected I should never see the two natives again. In fact, for the rest of the voyage they were kept to quarters, with what punishment I do not know.

The third day out we crossed from Cartagena to Mostaganem. There was some excitement on board as the ship described a complete circle just out of sight of the Spanish coast. It added nicely to the myth of the British blockade. I inquired the reason for this as I watched the wide circular wake in the sea. A fellow passenger whispered, "Orders from Vichy!" And these, indeed, always were in circles!

Our course righted, we went straight across all day long without incident. The sun was bright and the purple sea tossed up in creamy whitecaps as it does toward the African littoral. The March winds of Marseilles gave way to the softer breezes of the Barbary coast. The passengers had thrown off the restraint which had become a habit in France. They formed in groups and walked briskly around the decks. Those who were old residents of North Africa told me of the tremendous unexploited wealth of the territories. We discussed the proposed Trans-Saharan railway, the little known Sahara desert—that is, little known to us Americans, for it is not all heaped up in endless white sand dunes, but is spotted with luxuriant oases and crossed by many trails and motor roads. I heard about winter sports not far from Algiers and the rose gardens and crystal pools at El Golea, of the majestic and mysterious Hoggar where tall men go about veiled, a mountainous region deep in

the Sahara. It seemed the wealth and wonder of this continent only began with French North Africa.

As my elderly French friend from Orania had predicted, we met only one ship, a French cargo boat coming, they said, from Oran, loaded with grain. As usual, it was going to hug the Spanish coast, as we had, on its way back to Marseilles.

At tea time we sighted the headlands of Mostaganem and by dinnertime were turned on our course to the East. I noticed the coastal villages were not blacked out as the Gouverneur Generale X steamed smoothly along velvet waters where many a corsair had stalked its prey in the past. From the starboard rail, I looked out into the night on Africa. Almost four days of unrationed food and escape from the Vichy-Gestapo horror had caused a notable change. My Arab friends had got into trouble, but the rest of us were unmolested. I recalled there had once been a slogan in our lives back in France, asserting Liberty, Equality and Fraternity among men. It was wonderful to breathe this new, free air of Africa. General Weygand would be there. I could see more clearly the lights along coast roads. Far, far across the dark waters, the headlights of an automobile moved from time to time in a thin white cone. I could visualize that on the morrow I would again see the swishing and billowing of white garments in the Kasbah.

One of my youthful cabin mates touched me on the shoulder. "Don't forget to rise early, a little before dawn," he said, "for the most beautiful sunrise in the world."

Chapter Three

Arrival

WE MUST have been somewhere off Cherchell, an ancient Roman grain port, when I was awakened by my cabin mates. They were getting their baggage ready to debark at Algiers. It was still dark; there was time to watch the sunrise. My single bag was already packed—I was really travelling light. My clothes and typewriter and books were still in Paris, for I had left the French capital on a bicycle the day before the Germans came in. I still wore the same soiled and mended raincoat in which I had departed, with a few necessities wrapped up and tied to the baggage carrier along with my French gas mask.

Since that tragic exodus from Paris to Tours to Bordeaux and Marseilles I had acquired just enough property to fill one suitcase, and most of that consisted of books. So I welcomed the softer climate of the Algerian coast. My cabin mates were two brothers whose father was in a Marseilles hospital recovering from war wounds. They were nice boys and I found to my surprise, this last morning, that they spoke English quite well. They were not afraid to speak English, now they were close to Africa. They had been

careful to speak French before. In a warm burst of confidence they told me how their house in Paris (for they lived in a *hotel particuliere*) was being occupied by the Germans, and that their country home was also occupied. Their caretaker had told them the Germans had burned about half the books in their father's library in the country—taken them out, dumped them in the garden, and burned them. To do this the Nazis had had to rip the locked doors off the bookcases, which had been built into the walls. Such tales of Nazi vandalism were common; I had heard dozens of similar reports from other acquaintances.

It would be fine, I thought, to go about in Africa without seeing Germans.

We went up on deck in time to see a faint light in the East. The boat was proceeding at a much slower speed so we watched the miraculous sunrise in dead calm. Seamen who have been on all the seven seas have told me that the sunrise off the Barbary coast is the most wonderful in the world. This is not a chapter on sunrises, but it might easily be, for I was to learn that the physical aspects of Africa, its wondrous skies, its crystalline air and its burning sun are vital, component parts of its rich life. The sky was changing now as we watched. All miracles appear simple at first; afterward they remain forever unbelievable. The boat became a bark and the Eastern Sea the domain of Homer. Earth and sky exchanged places as I looked up into endless valleys of Amaranthine dusk where this creation was slowly forming. Worlds opened into other worlds in breath-taking

colors. I fancied I could discern green Arcadian fields and farther on and upward the probable realm of Olympus.

In this African sunrise there is always a moment of excitement, when something eminently celestial is taking place. One feels, alike with the Ancients, that the car of Phoebus is being made ready, for there is a great movement of fiery streaks and bursts of golden light, when, suddenly, the world is aflame, the car is off and radiant day is born. One can easily understand at such a moment the myth which interprets the sunrise as the golden chariot of Apollo racing on to the Pillars of Hercules. Before a sight like this, things of the spirit and the mind take on intrinsic values which make untenable the ugliness and horror of the regime being set up in the German Europe I had just left.

And so we reached Algiers in the full light of this wonderful day, the tenth of March. The date is imprinted on my memory as well as on my passport. The white city of Algiers, La Ville Blanche, as they call it, lay before us in its lap of encircling hills. We amused ourselves by picking out familiar objects. The other time I had been here was in 1930, when I had arrived direct from Marseilles at high noon. With my cabin mate and others, all of whom seemed to be joyously happy and gay, I now recognized landmarks. First, to the right, was the white pile of the Kasbah and its Arab quarter, the oldest part of Algiers. Then the Admiralty, in the foreground of the port, where happily the French tricolor still flew. The Vichy government had not

yet altered the French flag, almost the only thing they had not changed.

Next lay the modern buildings along the Boulevard Sadi Carnot, including the famous Hotel Aletti in the center of the port with its gambling casino. Later I learned that the German Armistice Commission was housed here. Nearby was the glittering white Moorish facade of the Algerian Prefecture, which in its interior is an absolute counterpart of every French Prefecture in existence—that is to say, a maze of rooms leading into rooms, and red tape leading into red tape.

We saw the idle ships in the harbor, another sign of the New Order, the long seawall and the promenade which is a delight to traverse at any time of the day or night, and the old palm-shaded public square in the center, which faces the Grand Opera House and is flanked by rare old cafés and hotels of another and happier day. We could see the gardens of Governor General Abrial's palace and the flowering villas of El Biar. Little did I realize on that March morning, of 1941, that a year and a half later American invasion forces would make their entry through these very same heights of El Biar.

The Gouverneur Generale X had to make a sharp detour about a certain buoy because the harbor had been mined. After that we moved into port and were soon warped in snugly against the new docks of the Compagnie Generale Transatlantique.

Landing in Algiers still had that strange air of a release from prison. One felt one was on free French soil, and I hope our American soldiers felt that way when they arrived in North Africa. It would be that much more of an incentive to keep it free and to crush out the stifling Axis from their last bridgehead in Tunisia. However, when I arrived, there was no immediate need of worrying about Americans. In fact, most Americans were leaving because the New Order had killed business. I was glad to know, on the contrary, that I was arriving, and I made up my mind that I would stay a long time, as long as possible. To anyone who had followed this war from its beginning, to any journalist who had watched as I had the successive moves of Germany since 1919, through almost every political conference in Europe, it was a foregone conclusion Germany would someday force the United States into this second world war.

I had felt it coming before the French collapsed in the Feld Grau avalanche from the Rhine. I could see clearly the necessity for the Lend-Lease arrangements and the Selective Service law which fortunately were put into effect in the United States long before that fateful December 7th. And I felt also, as I looked on this city of Algiers, still untouched by war on that March morning of 1941, that there was a personage somewhere in these white palaces who knew far more than the rest of us what lay ahead, and what role this territory of French North Africa must play in days to come. That personage was General Maxime Weygand. It was because of him I had come here. Naturally,

as soon as I was installed in a hotel, I would request an interview.

The Algerian port authorities at this stage were far less inquisitive than the port officials of Marseilles. They stamped my passport promptly and without comment. After many handshakes, and cordial invitations and addresses noted, I went off the dock with my suitcase and checked it in the parcel room, as I wanted to go forth in Algiers all alone, without encumbrance, and to breathe the free air, walk in the sunlight and revel in the fond memories of my first visit to the city, eleven years ago.

Like most old world places, it had not changed in a decade. I walked up the steps from the sea level to the terraced boulevards and main streets and I found the little palm-shaded square before the Opera still intact.

One of the first real shocks I suffered in Algiers came when I was climbing the steps from the wharf level. There at the left in a smoky little niche was a diminutive lunch bar which catered to dock workers. From this grimy interior emanated a tantalizing odor. They were frying ham and eggs. It was the first time I had known this savoury smell for nearly a full year. After months in an eggless, hamless world the sudden succulence of fried ham and eggs was a most provocative sensation.

At first it seemed that everything was the same as before. Then I noticed that the Place de la Republique had been renamed, and now bore the title of some obscure person whom Vichy favored.

The Café Terminus was still standing on the same corner as I remembered, clean and sparkling and smelling of good coffee. I walked through the square and up the Rue d'Isly, which is Algiers' main thoroughfare. It had not seemed to change. There were the same restaurants of eleven years before, the same book shops and cafés. It was wonderful. With the rising sun, my woolen pullover was already too warm, and I stuffed my beret in my pocket and walked bare-headed, as most Europeans do in North Africa. The cork helmets are for the South. And suddenly at my left there was an old café I had known before, the Brasserie des Arts, and what a sight! There were sandwiches piled up for early morning breakfasts: steak, and lamb, and veal, and cheese, and sausage. Piles of them! This was, indeed, too much. I walked in and ordered a veal sandwich and a glass of red wine. No bread tickets, no meat tickets, no remarks except an inquiry as to whether or not I wanted butter or mustard. There was more meat in each sandwich than I had eaten in Marseilles in a week. I ate three before pure shame stopped me. Under the rationed diet of Marseilles I had lost thirty-five pounds, and the temptation of so much plenty here was irresistible. I went across the street to another café and ate a fourth sandwich. There were boiled eggs in great pyramids here, at one franc apiece.

So much food was dazzling. Afterward I walked up the Rue d'Isly. The palms looked down on the new marble and glass palace of the Governor General, a lofty piece of modern architecture. Farther up the Rue d'Isly there were

new apartment houses and the suburbs were full of new villas. But these changes did not alter the character of the old Algiers. It seemed so much the same that the war might not have happened.

Like Marseilles, the city was crowded. I went to my former hotel, the Hotel Touring, and there I found a small room. I was told that this was a piece of good luck. But I soon found all was not to be so wonderful as my first impressions led me to believe. At the desk I gave them my baggage check and started out on another hatless stroll, intending to find Weygand's headquarters. But another surprise, and a disturbing one this time, lay in store for me before I left the hotel lobby.

The Touring, it turned out, was the headquarters of several lesser figures of the Italian Armistice Commission located in Algiers. There was an armed guard on each floor—because months before someone had assaulted an Italian General. As I walked through the lobby, I saw, talking with several Italians of the Armistice Commission, a German refugee whom I had met in Paris. He was a tall, obese man with bushy red hair. He had been an habitu  of the Caf  Flore in Paris, which was a center for many anti-Nazi Jewish and German refugees during the winter months of the war. At that time he had posed as a Jew (though I doubt that he was), and he had been on friendly terms with all of those who hated Hitler. And now here he was in Algiers, if anything fatter than before, and to his crop of flaming red hair he had added a pointed beard—also red,

and not dyed, although apparently he had grown this as a disguise. At that moment he looked my way, and recognized me with a visible start. It was the only time I saw him, but on the first opportunity I described him to an acquaintance in the French Secret Service who seemed already to know him. An active fifth column was already at work in Algiers.

In spite of this episode, the city of Algiers still seemed a marvel after wartime Marseilles. I lunched at the Chapon Fin, where the cuisine was of the same excellence as years ago, and in the afternoon I ate three more meat sandwiches at the Brasserie des Arts, a total of seven sandwiches for the day. Also, I had more red wine. The Algerian wine industry had grown with the years, and it was now in sharp competition with the vintages of France.

Although it was early March, the flower stands were bulging with blooms. I bought lilacs for my darkish little hotel room, where I returned to organize my papers for the assault on General Weygand. I had made a quick run around the newspapers and found the city was filled with French refugee journalists from Paris. I was not conducting a serious inquiry, nor was I asking questions on the political situation, for I would reserve that until later. But even in that superficial scamper around the Vichy-controlled newspapers, I found there was already a splendid spirit alive and throbbing in Algiers. To put it bluntly: they were as anti-German as Frenchmen can be. They were against the Petain-Hitler-Montoire collaboration, and they were what one could generally describe as pro-Ally, which would later

be pro-United Nations. It is true, England had lost some prestige, but most sane Frenchmen I talked with understood England's difficult position.

I had only wanted to find the way to Weygand's headquarters, but I found in addition something which pleased me even more, and that was the way everyone looked upon Weygand as a protector. Some even hinted that he might be the savior of France. As an American, I never felt prouder of my nationality. Everyone I talked with welcomed me cordially and warmly, and not only because they learned I had gone through the exodus from Paris. That an American correspondent should come to Algiers seemed to them a hopeful sign. America had become interested in North Africa.

I am sure that I made more than one Frenchman happier when I said then in all earnestness: "The war with Germany is not over. The Nazis have merely won the first battle."

Chapter Four

Interview with Weygand

MY REQUEST for an interview with General Weygand was granted without delay. A United Press correspondent, Joseph Ravotto, had come over from Morocco, and had also asked for an interview. We agreed to talk to Weygand together. We had found a sympathetic friend in the General's press attaché, Leopold Marchand. In civil life, Marchand was a playwright and had fond memories of Hollywood, to which he longed to return.

The Weygand delegation was manned by an efficient personnel of picked, youngish officers, who certainly had not been chosen for their loyalty to Germany. And as I had suspected, they gave only lip service to Vichy. But at this time of Weygand's induction to his delicate task, discretion and tact were recommended for all of us. Under the existing circumstances, I knew General Weygand would grant us a "Vichy" interview. The General was pro-Allied, so to speak; that is, pro-American and pro-British, but we also all realized that to win this game you had to "play ball."

Everywhere in the offices of the delegation one scented a new, fresh atmosphere. There was a noteworthy lack of red tape. Orders were given sharply over the telephone and immediately executed at the other end without confirming letters and endless documents. France had need of this kind of a new deal.

General Weygand had chosen the Arab Winter Palace as his headquarters. He declined a formal residence up in the cooler and shadier part of Algiers, and preferred to work down in the old city, just at the foot of the Kasbah, right in the Arab community. This was one sample of his political acumen.

The Winter Palace was a beautiful example of Moorish architecture, used in times past by the Deys of Algiers. Situated anywhere else it could have served as a museum.

We were notified by the General's aide, Major G., to be at his office in the Palace at ten o'clock in the morning for the interview. The Major was typical of the Weygand staff. He was tall and physically fit, quick as a flash, occupied every minute, as close to Weygand as his kepi, yet completely detached from him when necessary. While we waited in Major G.'s office for General Weygand, I noticed the Major was reading and underscoring the world's radio news in a mimeographed publication which was printed by the Algiers administration twice a day for private circulation.

The interview with General Weygand, stilted and formalized as it was, will give an approximate idea of how this great general conducted himself to the satisfaction of Vichy,

how he respected his commitments to Marshal Petain, yet at the same time maintained a kind of sibylline note that left no doubt as to his real intentions.

Here is the interview which censorship permitted, roughly transcribed from my notes:

General Maxime Weygand, delegate of the French Government to North Africa, or as one might describe him, "Protector" of French North Africa, today received the correspondent of the International News Service in his headquarters in the Winter Palace. General Weygand declared that the French forces, like the French people, are now completely unified under Marshal Petain and are ready to resist any foreign encroachment on North Africa.

General Weygand described the British attacks on North Africa as "regrettable," saying, "The British attacks at Oran and at Dakar have cost Great Britain dearly in the minds of the French in North Africa." The General then expressed his gratitude for American aid to France.

General Weygand now comes to work in his office in this seventeenth-century Moorish Palace every morning before nine o'clock, arriving usually in a big, specially built Buick car. This morning he was dressed in a neat fitting gray suit and gray hat, wearing only the yellow ribbon of the Medaille Militaire in his lapel. He was saluted by a guard drawn up in ranks before the Palace and acclaimed as usual by a white clad throng of natives from the Kasbah. In the sunny patio of the Palace, slender marble columns

carved in delicate arabesques and the brown and blue ceramics in the walls contrasted vividly with the French uniforms of the visiting members of the General's staff. Inside the Palace Marshal Petain's portrait was prominently displayed.

In the little closet-like office where I was received by the General there also hung a large engraved portrait of Marshal Foch. General Weygand looks sixty years old rather than seventy-four. The alert gestures, the merry glint of his eyes, the lean face and mouth and close-cropped iron gray hair combine the steely hardness of Mangin with the humaneness of his old chief, Marshal Foch.

A conversation with General Weygand leaves little doubt that he is leaving anything to chance. Referring to the Lend-Lease project, he said, "I admire President Roosevelt as a man of resolution. I am a soldier myself, therefore I respect the quality of action in your president. The launching of the Lend-Lease project will not alter the position here because French Africa is the same as France. France and French Africa form one economic, political, social and moral unity. Our people are all firmly united under Marshal Petain. I am here to execute his orders."

General Weygand reiterated his intentions to defend French Africa by French forces alone. I asked him if such a policy envisaged eventual military collaboration with another nation. He replied, "None can predict so far in the future, any more than I can predict that in the hereafter

the door of heaven will be opened to me. In any case, the decisions must come from the French government."

When I asked him about the event of a tactical surprise coming from one side or another, General Weygand replied, "I am watching most cautiously in every direction. We are prepared to act quickly. The government has already made its position as clear as day in case of an attack on North Africa."

General Weygand recalled then that France was scrupulously observing the terms of the armistice and would continue to honor its engagement. I then asked him if he considered any eventual occupation of Spain as a menace to North Africa automatically releasing France from its armistice commitments. The General replied, "The relations between France and Spain are matters for two governments to adjust. The problems which we have in common can and must be settled pacifically."

When I asked him what he thought of the possibility of the arrival of British troops at the Tunisian frontier, General Weygand said, "That would be one of the eventualities of war which rests entirely with the belligerents. But in case of an invasion I would strike back."

Discussing the subject of aid in any form from the United States, General Weygand explained that the United States could best help North Africa in the industrial and economic field, adding, "We are short of some products, notably gasoline which we require for our harvests. Both the *Chargé*

d’Affaires, Mr. Murphy, who has extensively toured North Africa, and the Ambassador, Admiral Leahy, whom I saw in Vichy, are well aware of these problems.”

Concerning relations with the British, General Weygand said, “I have no relations with Great Britain. The attacks on Oran and Dakar were regrettable. They cost Britain dearly in the minds of the French in North Africa.”

General Weygand concluded that the morale and the situation of the French North African forces were excellent. He described the armed forces as having been reorganized and consolidated after the events of the armistice. General Weygand intends to continue indefinitely his residence in North Africa and is leaving later today for an inspection tour of Morocco.

Such was the censored interview which we cabled to America. The interview itself was capable of much wider interpretation, and in view of subsequent events in which General Weygand ended up a prisoner of the Germans, I am violating no confidence in revealing these facts.

First, when I asked the General if he had any relations with the British, he replied, “Not for the present.” I put this in the interview, and the quite charming Count de Rose, a former attaché of the French Embassy in London who also worked in Weygand’s press section, said with a smile, “I think we had better delete, ‘Not for the present.’” Count de Rose was a careful and experienced young diplo-

mat, and in the course of coming months became a good friend of mine. It was clear enough what the General's true sentiments were, but also clear that this was no time to make them internationally public.

When I asked the General what he would do in case of a tactical surprise from one direction or another, he answered immediately that he would defend North Africa. But when I asked from what armed forces he might most likely expect attack, he smiled and shrugged his shoulders. He did not answer. He knew I meant the Germans, and I knew he meant the Germans. But he could not get caught on that subject, so he assured me that he was watching "in all directions." Also, when I asked about the eventuality of a British movement at the frontier of Tunisia, his reply was equivocal at first. I recall that he waited some moments before answering, then gave me the answer as I quoted it in the interview. However, one word was added. My first story said, "The General replied, 'Such would be one of the eventualities of war.'" The censor changed it to: "The General replied *promptly* . . ."

There was no doubt that the General wanted to talk at length about American collaboration but prudence forbade him, so he put American aid down to industrial and economic questions. In fact, for some time the General had been carrying on conversations with the United States Embassy officials and with Chargé d'Affaires Robert Murphy, then in Algiers. This actually did result in highly important economic agreements which were the real beginning of the

American "invasion," let us say, of French North Africa. But more of this in a later chapter.

What to me was most revealing in the entire interview with General Weygand was a little, barely noticed item about Marshal Petain's picture. I dare say there were photographs of the Marshal in the Winter Palace, inasmuch as they were plastered in every structure of France and the colonies which contained four walls. In the interview I observed, however, that over the General's desk there was a large engraved portrait of Marshal Foch, his old chief, and for whom Weygand was chief of staff in the whole world. The cautious and highly thoughtful Count de Rose suggested, however, that I add at the beginning of the interview that inside the Palace "one sees Marshal Petain's portrait prominently displayed," and that I say of the Foch portrait that it "also hung" directly overhead. The portrait of Foch did hang overhead, but it hung quite alone.

The foregoing may seem like little "nothings," yet they revealed the slender but vital elements which divided Vichy from North Africa, and which divided Petain and his Darlan cabinet from Weygand and his anti-German staff.

I cannot exaggerate the political differences which divided Marshal Petain and General Weygand. I point them out here as I knew them. Later events in North Africa proved conclusively that this political cleavage increased. General Weygand's efficiency and popularity increased and Marshal Petain's prestige diminished. There was once a great French colonial administrator in Morocco, Marshal Lyautey. He

created out of Morocco a thriving, an orderly and prosperous Protectorate. As Proconsul of France he is still famous in colonial history. Weygand was fast becoming another Lyautey. The Germans forced his recall and contrived his eventual imprisonment in the fortress of Koenigstein. But they were too late. The Weygand idea and the Weygand plan had already taken root in French North Africa.

Chapter Five

From the Cannebière to the Kasbah

BEFORE we look further into the colorful panorama of North Africa, I would like definitely to show the place of the Weygand delegation and its tradition in the political strategy that paved the way for the American occupation.

I am convinced the Weygand administration was the pivotal point on which North Africa swung away from German-dominated Vichy toward the United Nations. When I walked out of the Winter Palace with the United Press Correspondent Ravotto, we agreed we had a very nice and harmless little interview, but we felt somehow that both Vichy and the Germans were being outsmarted right here in Algiers. From that day on I never had a doubt as to how things would go in North Africa.

The way we cleared our interview through the Algiers post office over the cables to America was indicative of Weygand's authority. As foreign correspondents, Ravotto and I had not had time to get our press cards and other interminable formalities in order. The Commercial Cable Company, usually quite efficient toward correspondents

in foreign fields, was ready to assume the charges, but the director of the post office was insisting on the usual complicated credentials. We appealed to Weygand's Secretariat.

An intelligent young man who looked like an officer in civilian clothes phoned the honorable director of the post office. He naturally got his *adjoint* on the phone. "I must talk with the director himself," he insisted. "This is General Weygand's office." There was some objection at the other end. Our man quietly but firmly insisted, and finally got the director himself.

"There are two American correspondents here who have not had time to obtain their telegraph cards," he explained, "and they want to cable their dispatches to New York. Can you clear them? We will take the responsibility."

There was evidently the usual strong objection to this unheard-of procedure. More polite but firm words, then our man said, in a very low, clear voice, spacing each word, "General Weygand wants these dispatches to go to New York immediately. Do you understand?" Then, even more slowly came the words, "General Weygand insists—he *insists*." There was evidently a flutter of words at the other end, then a cryptic "all right" in French. Our man smiled as he hung up the phone.

"Go to the post office," he said, "and if you have any trouble, call me back immediately."

We had no trouble. The employee at the cable window had been warned and he took our dispatches quite amiably. It was always like that. When General Weygand insisted,

he got what he wanted, but he rarely had to insist. The press section was watchful as well as efficient. They checked matters over the radio and informed us the next day that the interviews had been transmitted, as our dispatches had been quoted in part over American radio stations.

This was certainly a complete reversal of the way things were done in France. As correspondent in Marseilles I had spent weeks getting my dispatches through the post office. Had not a most resourceful and patient Commercial Cable representative there taken the trouble to go to Vichy to push through my telegraphic cards, I might still be marooned in Marseilles. Things were being done here in the old Kasbah.

Opposite the Winter Palace in the Rue Bruse, the personnel of the Weygand delegation was moving in and rooms were being cleaned out and aired. An economic section for North Africa was being installed under Yves Chatel, who later became Governor General of Algeria. Weygand realized that diplomacy marches ahead with economics. One of his workers told me over aperitifs one day, "The General believes that industry and peace are sisters."

Algiers is as modern a city as Paris, and except for the numbers of natives shuffling about in white robes, sand-colored or dirty white *burnouses*, wearing sandals or heel-less slippers, one might be in some big, clean city of France. There is a deep blue sky, a brilliant white sun, and many symbols of the East, but as a city, Algiers is essentially European. This is true of most of the principal cities of North Africa: Casablanca, Oran, Constantine, Bone, Tunis—

although Tunis has a more extensive native section and less functional modern architecture.

My first few days on this second assignment to Algiers were spent in visits at the foot of the Kasbah, to the Weygand delegation. The Kasbah is the term generally given to the old native or Arab quarter of Algiers, although the actual Kasbah is the walled-in and one time fortified citadel on the heights overlooking the Arab quarter. This Kasbah was the grim enclosure from which the old Barbary pirate chiefs operated their domination of the nearby Mediterranean waters. In the past, hundreds of white "heathen" captives were sold in slavery within the crenellated walls of this Moorish fortress.

Since the advent of the French army in 1830, and the easy subjection of the Turkish and Algerian garrison, the Kasbah has gradually become a relic—a very picturesque relic. Palms and waving eucalyptus and cool green plane trees give this fortress the lazy atmosphere of an old world park. One of the buildings contains an excellent collection of nineteenth-century weapons used by the French and Arabs. And the descending streets and buildings, straight down to the seafront, have remained as they always were, a labyrinthine maze of narrow alleys, houses, dens, dives, shops, kitchens, and markets, all of which is loosely designated as the Kasbah.

And so like everyone else, I refer to this wonderful old native quarter of Algiers as the Kasbah. Despite its tortuous

cobbled streets, its capricious flights of worn steps, its sudden turns into hot sunlight or its plunges into seemingly blind alleys, and despite its reputation in the movies, it is much more safe than the Quartier Isolé in Marseilles.

To make a comparison, Marseilles has its Cannebière, about four long blocks of cafés, shops and hotels, which descend into the old Greek or Phoenician Basin, called the Vieux Port. At the right of this Old Port is the historic Quartier Isolé, or Reserved Quarter. And for slums, poverty, crime, drunkenness, prostitution and a diversity of races, the Quartier Isole has no equal in any of the great ports of the world. Even in peacetime, it would be foolhardy for a stranger to walk alone through the Quartier Isolé in Marseilles.

But in the Kasbah, either before the war or afterward, a stranger could walk through in daytime in perfect safety. The main thoroughfares leading into or fringing the Kasbah, such as the Rue de la Lyre, the Rue de la Harpe, or the Rue Bruse, are streets filled with interesting shops and sidewalk bazaars. All the handicrafts of North Africa are represented. The air is sweet with the essence of amber and jasmine and rose. In normal times, markets are piled high with fruits, oranges, figs, dates, peaches and nuts of all kinds. There are little shops filled with richly colored fabrics, handwoven woolen fabrics from Tlemcen, gaily designed pottery from Tunisia, objects in filigreed and beaten silver and brass, inlaid woods, taborets and chairs,

embossed and colored leather goods from Morocco, and antiquities of all kinds collected from the marts and souks of a hundred cities.

There are flower vendors and ubiquitous Arab bootblacks and fortune tellers and scribes sitting cross-legged writing flowery letters, and there are the tellers of tales at the street corners. For there are tales and tales of the Kasbah of the time of the Deys. In the Arab world everything ends in a story. The Thousand and One Nights is only a beginning. Here in the Kasbah, as in other Arab communities, the tellers of tales are always the center of a spellbound and motley crowd. Few can read and write among the Moslem millions, and for these illiterate people, the teller of tales has the same importance as our newspapers, our radio or cinema. The gifted orator or the subtle raconteur commands many styles, according to his tale, and he goes on and on, sometimes in relays with another. This allows him to collect a few sous while the narrative is still being told.

From the East to the West in Africa, the teller of tales spreads the news. The Europeans call it the Arab grapevine, and it moves almost as fast as the telegraph. Stories, news and events flash across the desert, through many dialects, and arrive at far-off points in amazingly accurate form, and at remarkable speed.

And as a counterpart to the teller of tales, there is the scribe. He writes letters and contracts for the illiterate. Seated at a convenient spot with his little box of paper, ink and pens, he writes in a flourishing hand the kind of

letter his client wants. A love letter, if need be, and in a style appropriate to the situation. He will write the letter of a humble sweetheart or of an outraged lover; or he will pen a modest little note beginning a flirtation, or a brutal blast breaking it off forever. He writes dunning letters and flowery notes in Koranic poesy. Any letter, any style, for a few sous. The scribe is a wise man who knows many secrets and understands the pangs of unrequited love—and of unpaid creditors.

The glamour of the Kasbah rises and falls with the state of the tourist traffic to Algiers. In wartime, the little shops are thinned out and the accent is rather on food. But there always seems to be more food in the Kasbah than anywhere else. The denizens of these fireless, waterless dwellings depend much on the street kitchens which consist usually of a cauldron of boiling fat in which joints of lamb or chicken are browned. These kitchens line the steep passages of the Kasbah and their golden brown offerings give forth a succulent odor, although cleanliness is hardly a requisite.

Architecturally, the Kasbah is more Hollywood than the films have pictured it. It is doubtful that there are characters like Pepy le Moko living a charmed gangster life in the Kasbah in wartime, but there are streets and passages and hideouts fully as picturesque as any Hollywood fantasy. It is true, there is a street filled with the little one-room huts of prostitutes, before which these ladies sit pensively. These dens have enormous numbers on the doors, and when a

good Mohammedan finds himself dwelling alongside one of these brothels, he usually labels his own little doorway, *Maison honnette* or "respectable house," as a warning to brawling or drunken wanderers from the port.

Also deep in the Kasbah are two shrines much visited by serious pilgrims. There is a little garden cemetery dedicated to three fabled princesses, about which there is a pretty tale, and there is the sanctuary containing the grave of Abder Rahmane, whom all Algerian natives venerate as a patron saint.

And down at the bottom of this teeming Arab community of dirt and disorder and of swarming flies, of lightless hovels and sunlit areaways, is the superbly wrought Winter Palace and a fine Moorish library filled with modern books, the so-called Archbishop's Palace. This Palace gives evidence of that strange Arab civilization which created architectural works of the rarest fancy and beauty, balconies and colonnaded patios which are poems in stone and marble, surrounded by hovels and byways of surface drainage and indescribable filth.

It is perhaps unfair to condemn one civilization because it fails to merge esthetically into another. The dirt and depravity of the Kasbah is due to overcrowded conditions superimposed on a housing scheme devised before there were city drainage systems. Add to this the deplorable economic position of the natives, working in an almost slavlike peonage, and you can hardly have a model community.

General Weygand set up a long range program of providing better homes for the native population. He became much interested in their welfare, their social system and their general health. On the other hand, the natives have profited by French occupation. Thousands of them have regularly paying jobs and many are working for the administration. On the tramcars of Algiers one sees almost as many conductors and motormen wearing fezzes as one sees Frenchmen wearing employees' caps. In the big centers like Casablanca, Oran or Bizerte, the natives have found plenty of gainful occupation.

But in modern Algiers the Europeans predominate, although on the streets and in the shops one sees the wealthier natives immaculately dressed in the whitest and finest of robes. The costumes of some of the tall, handsome Caids or Bachages frequently cost as much as three or four hundred dollars, and they sit about the modern cafés or restaurants adding a rich note of color. But whether the Arab walks in rags or in flowing silken clothes, he invariably shows the dignity of his race. I have seen old men going about barefoot, carrying their usual long walking stick, clothed in shabby semi-nudity, yet their heads were held high and intelligence and grace shone in their eyes.

The cities of North Africa are all the more interesting for this contrast of the West and East, both as concerns the people and the architecture. In these cities, the Arabs and the Europeans each have their own cafés, but it does not prevent one from patronizing the other. The Arab cafés are

frequently more crowded, though far less elegant. The European cafés in the center of the cities are as modern and as large and comfortable as any in Paris. In the Arab cafés there are many nargyles, or what we call the hubble bubble smoking apparatus, the smoke coming through a kind of hose, in a water-cooling system. In the European cafés there is much more alcohol consumed, inasmuch as the Arab is not permitted alcoholic beverages. The native cannot stand drink like a European and he quickly gets out of hand with the sun's heat and the alcohol.

The center of Algiers is adorned with many fine cafés and restaurants. In the warm African climate the café terraces are particularly attractive. People eat and drink out of doors, as they do in France. And in normal times, Algiers is probably one of the most comfortable and pleasant cities in the world to live in. It has the advantages of being a metropolis and the charms of the easy life of the Mediterranean or Mussulman community. The little villas in the outskirts are quite modern and adorned with gardens green the year 'round. Algiers has several complete department stores, and the equivalent of our five-and-ten-cent stores. There are innumerable small shops, such as jewelers, tailors, baggage stores, haberdashers, and pharmacies as modern as those in New York.

The main thoroughfare, the Rue d'Isly, is green with laurel trees throughout the year, while there are other streets shaded with spreading palms. Near the American consulate there is a luxuriant spot called the Park de Gal-

land, a series of terraced gardens and glens in semi-tropical verdure, and fragrant with roses and pink geraniums and heavy wistaria and the purple-clustered Bougainvillia which flowers continuously in all Mediterranean lands. In fact, Algiers is a city of gardens, of overhanging palms and flowering vines and continuous breezes of desert perfumes, heavy with roses and sometimes by night fresh with far-off jasmine or scented with sandalwood or carnation. The moonlight is ivory color, the night is indigo, and the stars flame as they do in Egypt. There is no rain after the spring downpours are over and sea bathing is popular on miles of large and small, private and public Mediterranean strands. In wartime the lack of transport makes these beaches somewhat remote, but they are all still there. At Tipaza, near Algiers, there is a dead Roman city by the sea, as at Sabratha in Tripoli, where blue waves splash softly against mosaic and fluted pink African marble and rare friezes and majestic broken columns spread out silently under the burning sun.

The center of metropolitan life in Algiers is the modern Hotel Aletti. There is situated the gambling casino, the Cintra Bar, a terrace café and a fine restaurant. Before the American landing, the Aletti was a notorious rendezvous of that distinguished international brotherhood known as government representatives, gentlemen *en mission*, diplomats, business investigators, salesmen, consular officials, soldiers in civilian uniform, *agents provocateurs*, informers, harlots (male and female), remittance men, promoters,

confidence men and just plain ordinary spies. You will hear much more later on of this disreputable international rendezvous.

Outside the Aletti there were usually the American and German automobiles of the German Armistice Commission, the Italian and American automobiles of the Italian Armistice Commission, the American automobiles of the American Consulate, and, just by contrast, a French car belonging to the Count de Rose of the Weygand Delegation, which scandalized everyone by its big plaque, marked G.B. (Great Britain). The Count de Rose, who had brought his car from London where he worked in the French Embassy, did not see why he should bother to remove the G.B., and it might have caused a diplomatic incident in the days when one was supposed to hate England. But the Count de Rose and his charming countess did not bother. The last time I saw his car it still had the big G.B. on it. It probably still has. Up in the crowded gambling casino the Germans and Italians and Americans and French and wealthy Caids and flashy liaison ladies used to rub elbows at baccarat or roulette, but before the Aletti portals, it was forbidden that their automobiles should touch.

The Germans protested the parking of the snappy American Consular cars before the Aletti, especially after Germany and America were at war, and so the most amiable Algerian Prefect of Police acquiesced to the demands of the German Commission that the Americans park their cars on a side street. The Americans conformed to the prefectoral orders,

although I believe now they are parking their cars as usual, in front of the Aletti. There are no German cars there now, nor any Italian ones—if I am rightly informed.

But all this is getting somewhat ahead of my story. The Hotel Aletti in that spring of 1941 was a melodramatic and fantastic rendezvous—the favorite clearing house for Axis North African operations.

Chapter Six

The Hotel Aletti

THE Hotel Aletti is a big, white, modern building in the center of Algiers on an arcaded boulevard that faces the sea. The main entrance is at the back, away from the sea, in the busy Rue de Constantine. Before the entrance, which is composed of a broad portico, there is a short driveway wide enough to park a few cars. Between the car space and the street there is a small, unused, vine-covered pergola which was intended to be a sun bar or a café terrace, but placed too near the incoming cars on the hotel side and too close to the street traffic on the other side. This little pergola is very much like the Aletti; a lot of ideas originally planned for the big hotel did not pan out. To the right of the Aletti portico is a spacious café in the French style, and connected with the café is a modern cinema which used to show the principal American films.

The Aletti was built for the dazzling Centenary of Algeria in 1930, commemorating one hundred years of French rule. I was there at the time. In those warm sunny weeks of May, Algiers was animated and gay. The Aletti was jammed. Wealthy colonials glittered in new clothes and

jewels. Official Frenchmen and visitors from France crowded the lobbies. The maitres d'hotel were perspiring, waiters were getting orders mixed, there was noise and music and the tinkling of champagne glasses and confusion.

The Centenary program had been richly garnished by everything imaginable. Algeria wanted to show France what it had accomplished in one hundred years. As a newspaper correspondent I gave up most of the attractions. There was a naval review, beauty contests, trips to the desert, agricultural shows, official balls, yachting parties, tours of the Kasbah, a reception in the summer palace, athletic sports, native handicraft exhibitions, baccarat and roulette in the Aletti Casino and a Fantasia at the Caroubia race-track. There were also horse races, but the Fantasia was something to remember. It is a sort of stampede by mounted native soldiers. Dressed in white and multicolored regimental robes, they race down the field in a thundering charge on Arabian steeds, firing their long rifles into the air as they attacked an imaginary foe.

The trips along the coast to Tunisia and down to the desert were delightful. My principal assignment, however, was the naval review, and when that was over my work was done. But even at that festive time there was some dirty work going on in the Mediterranean. In 1930, when Hitler was still looked upon as an obscure Bavarian beer hall brawler, during that same May week, the German navy was holding its own little review for the Italians off Sicily. The Axis was being oiled up. The German navy, in its own

way, was an illegal navy. It violated the spirit and the letter of the Versailles treaty. But inasmuch as the United States had not signed the treaty, and felt isolated from the quarrels of Europe, the existence of a growing German navy was not considered important.

When I returned to the Aletti in 1941, it looked a bit shabby, but life in Algiers was still concentrated there. The big lobbies were lively with a strangely cosmopolitan crowd. The gambling casino was closed and the dancing girls no longer enlivened the music hall on the top floor, for it, too, was closed. The café outside was almost empty.

But the Cintra Bar, which is the main feature on the ground floor of the Aletti, was the center of intrigue and afternoon excitement. With the advent of the Weygand delegation to North Africa, things began to pick up. Three American correspondents had actually put in an appearance in Algiers. After Ravotto of the United Press, Bill McGaffin of the Associated Press joined our group. Censors who could read English were in demand.

Every day some new American would show up at the Aletti. Either he was a commercial representative from the interior who was fed up with the New Order and was going home, or he was a new man in the Consular service, "just looking around."

And the Aletti was just the right place to look around. For all the boys were there. They may have had falsified passports and faked identity papers and cryptic code messages to work out at nights, but they spoke good French

and had perfect manners. The Cintra Bar was the epicenter of all that mysterious gentry whose faces are familiar in many old-world capitals. In fact, there are five main centers in the old world where political mysteries, organized murder, plots and counterplots flourish in the suave atmosphere of port, sherry and cocktails, where there are always obvious gentlemen in tweeds and Oxford grays and dainty ladies not too hard to meet.

These centers, in the most recent census, are the Grand Hotel Bar in Stockholm, the Minza in Tangiers, the Palacio in Estoril outside Lisbon, the Park Hotel in Istanbul, and the Aletti-Cintra in Algiers.

The Aletti had always been the rendezvous of the spendthrift crowd in North Africa, and before the French armistice, the spies had always made it a regular port of call. After the French were out of the war, the Italian Armistice Commission chose the Aletti as its African headquarters, and then things began to happen. The Italian Consul in Algiers, Signor Arrivabene, a pleasant official whose white hair and easy-going manner seemed at odds with theatrical Italian saluting, was the nominal chief. With him were two admirals, two generals, two colonels, a group of majors and a flock of captains to the number of twenty in all. The Italians, like most of the others in the Aletti, spoke perfect French. Only the American correspondents had the temerity to speak English—a jarring note!

After the Italians settled down in the Aletti, the inevitable presence of the Germans was noted. They, too, like the

Italians, were in civilian clothes and spoke French. They had no technical right to barge en masse into the Aletti, but they came anyway. At first they formed a group of eight. The Germans were absorbed in a mysterious routine. Now and then a German officer in resplendent uniform and medals would swing through the Aletti, usually en route on some special mission from somewhere to Morocco. The Germans were always going to Morocco. If they weren't going to Morocco, they would be coming from Morocco. With each country that the Nazis took over, the Germans seemed to grow bolder and more numerous.

When I strolled into the Aletti this time I had not seen the fascist salute since I was in Rome. A group of well-dressed Italians seated together in overstuffed leather chairs suddenly stood up and saluted an elderly white-haired man who returned the salute apathetically. I learned that he was the head of the Armistice Commission. The chiefs of the commission lived at the Aletti; the small fry stayed at the Hotel Touring. But the Italians received very little attention.

Across the big hall, in a kind of annex to the lobby, there was another group about a table. They were the Germans, I was told by an acquaintance who was undoubtedly an informer. The main German Armistice Commission for North Africa was settled at Casablanca, at the Hotel Anfa, between the city and the sea, where they used to have machine-gun practice on the distant beach.

"The Germans and the Italians do not mix very much," my informer explained. "They meet and talk together oc-

casionally but each group seems to go its separate way as if it were in a different kind of business." He laughed as he stressed the word "business." He knew everybody's business, I soon found out, and he was losing no time in finding out mine. But he was on the friendly side and later proved it many times.

In this harmless little menagerie of murderers, polite pirates and fifth-column cut-throats, it was fascinating to watch the animals at play. The regular crowd began dropping in every afternoon about four o'clock. The Cintra Bar of the Aletti occupies the lounge off the lobby and a big long room of its own off the lounge. At the top end of the big room is a regular mahogany bar. The Cintra was accordingly the local oasis for drinks, dates, conversations, poker dice, flirtations, telephone calls, gossip, rumor, information and even tea, if one insisted. It was a thoroughly reliable scandal exchange.

Along with the Italians and Germans came the other spies and regular agents and those who check on other agents and those who double check on them. The dancing girls who had been closed out of the Casino had drifted into the bar and the lower regions of this Aletti fortress and they formed in vivid groups with the local young bloods in sport coats and white flannels.

On some days the Cintra bar was unique. There might be a couple of handsomely robed Caids representing the Mussulman fraternity, conversing quietly and drinking orangeade. There would be a group of international-looking

Americans with perhaps some well-dressed women with them, and like the Germans, they too would be speaking French. There would be French naval officers from Vichy, not too sensitive to be seen with Germans, and there might be another group of Frenchmen at the bar, quietly cursing out the naval officers. There were refugees from Paris who wept in their Vermouth Curaçao at the mention of Montmartre or the Quai Voltaire. There would be French refugee journalists reluctantly editing Vichy trash for the local newspapers, who always referred privately to the Germans as *Les Epinards* (Spinach).

For a while one corner of the bar was firmly held in place by a dapper American representative of the Standard Oil Company. He seemed to have vague American and Swedish friends who came and went, involved in heavy industry. And they in turn were all friends of the American Consul Generals in North Africa. The heavy industry boys seemed to know each other before the war and will probably be good friends after the war, since iron and steel have no conscience and no flag. And for a time there were two convivial gentlemen who sold American tractors and who knew all about the potential agricultural wealth of North Africa. But they were going home if they could ever get their visas through to Lisbon. And there was a crack-pot mining engineer who carried a little hammer with him in his pocket and told about tapping (with his little hammer) exposed veins of raw copper in the mountains of Morocco.

Interspersed throughout this Cintra crowd, seen dimly

through the haze of cigarette smoke and the fumes of drink, were the "flat feet" from the Prefecture of Police. No other name will do for them. They are alike the world over. They speak different languages, but they all slouch the same way, wear their hats the same way and wear the same model shoes. They were the invisible badge of the sleuth.

And strangest of all was the rumor squad. They seemed to defy analysis. They took photographs on the beach, dressed well, ran with pretty girls, worked at jobs that had no fixed hours and were rakishly anti-German. They had good connections and put out stories at aperitif time so that journalists might become confused and lose their minds. One heard that French warships were escorting Italian troopships off Tunisia; that the Americans were just off Casablanca; that Weygand had been recalled, that he had not been recalled; that the natives had risen up in the southern territories, paid by the Germans; that the Sultan loves the English and hates the Germans, and vice versa; and that the Germans were planning to invade North Africa.

Perhaps it was the heat, or drink or mental inactivity but many of these rumors caused the American consuls no end of trouble, for they all were said to come straight from the Governor General or the Grand Vizier himself.

The Cintra Bar became an essential part of the foreign correspondents' routine. Where else could one meet the German tourists en route to Morocco to stir up revolts among the natives? Where else could one be sure to see the new fifth-column faces in town? You became conspicu-

ous in the Cintra Bar, and being conspicuous, you were not under suspicion. Had I kept to my room, read my newspapers and studied my maps, I would have been searched the first week—instead of months later.

It must be remembered that this was Algiers before the sinister face of the Axis had begun to scowl on its North African friends. Nothing had yet been rationed in North Africa and except for a shortage in gasoline, it was a land of plenty. In fact, the regime was so benevolent that wounded British officers marooned in Algeria were permitted to go about unmolested. It did not last long.

The inquiring snouts of the Gestapo were already pointed our way. I knew within a few days after my arrival that I was being tagged and watched and “tailed” from time to time. One day I asked a genial friend of the old “deuxieme bureau” why there were so many earnest workers hanging about the Aletti.

The famous “deuxieme bureau” was the intelligence division of the French army, now disbanded by the Germans. But it continued to function under another name. My friend was a one-time popular roisterer whom I had known in heedless, pre-war Paris. His somewhat distinguished person had adorned many a party at the Ritz, at Frank’s bar or at Ciro’s, and now he was just in Algiers with his wife and her dog, and was loafing about the Aletti.

He was indeed a good friend, on the “right side,” and some of us had dubbed him Snow White. So Snow White,

of the "disbanded" *deuxieme bureau* explained the hazards of life in Algiers as follows:

"You see, first, there is the regular Secret Service crowd, my bunch. Then there is Governor General Abrial's men; and then you have the Delegation for French North Africa, Weygand, his crowd. Then you have the departmental Prefecture of Algeria and the local Prefect of Police, they make up another crew, all amateurs. Then you have the Vichy government, always nosing about. Then you have Darlan's navy scouts who are suspicious of everyone; and then you have the German Commission with their Gestapo weasels. And lastly you have the Italian Armistice Commission with a few hired skunks and local Italians. That makes eight different sets of wizards likely to complicate your life, so you'd better behave."

Snow White took it all good-humoredly and warned me that I need not worry. In fact, he said to me one day over a cocktail within two feet from a little broad-shouldered Gestapo man who had moved into the Aletti: "I am likely to get into more trouble than you are. You are only a newspaperman, and you're an American. You see, I am still a Frenchman."

It was Snow White who tipped me off to many amusing things later. One day at Charles, a cozy little gourmet restaurant always filled with Frenchmen who were pro-French, my well-informed friend said, "The other day, I told you there were eight different services watching things

in Algiers. Well, I missed one of the most important. I forgot to mention that Scotland Yard is with us—one of their best. If you meet him never speak English to him because he has forgotten the language; that is, for the time being.” Snow White looked quizzically at me and added as an afterthought, “I presume the United States is not neglecting this quiet little corner of old Africa.”

Chapter Seven

The “Gentlemen” of Vichy

I HAD not been many days in Algiers when I sensed certain political trends which I felt would sooner or later involve us all in real adventure. I had made many new friends and acquaintances, as correspondents are likely to do, and from them I heard in detail the news which was only partially revealed or camouflaged in the newspapers.

April in Algiers was a month of perfect days, of turquoise skies, fresh, cool mornings and rose-scented afternoons, forecasting the golden warmth of a long summer. I used to read the morning newspapers in the Café Novelty. The French use English words sometimes with about the same appropriateness as we use French ones. The Novelty restaurant and café was situated in the Rue d'Isly in the very heart of Algiers, overlooking the Place Bugeaud, which was named after the Marshal of France who conquered Algiers in 1830. The Place, forming a little square in the Rue d'Isly, was set off with a bronze statue of Bugeaud (which the Germans had not yet melted down for copper) and back of the statue was the white headquarters of the 19th Military Region of North Africa. This region was always commanded

by a general and the headquarters in truth was a very important spot. The headquarters had a small barracks in the rear which was full of black Senegal troops in red fezzes, and this gave the quarter an air of security. It was always comforting to see evidence that the French army was still in existence.

The Café Novelty was much frequented by aviators and a sort of middle class society of Algiers. It was delightful in the mornings. The perfumes of the flowers in the little square fell over the café terrace and the slight rustling of the palms over the flower beds and about the statue provided an exotic atmosphere.

The morning newspapers which I usually read were the *Echo d'Alger*, which was secretly anti-Axis and anti-collaborationist, and the *Depeche Algerienne*, which was owned by a wealthy colonial family and was frankly pro-Vichy and pro-German. There were day-old newspapers available from Tunis, Constantine, Oran and even Casablanca. There were also French newspapers which came by plane from unoccupied France and Marseilles, but these were disgusting. They sounded like Nazi propaganda translated directly into French. The Parisian newspapers, which often printed long lists of names of Frenchmen executed in reprisal killings, were obtainable only through the underground in Algiers.

I could see by these newspapers that the Vichy government, which eventually exercised stern authority in North Africa, was out to make all Frenchmen hate England and

America. I could see the tentacles of Vichy and of Germany reaching across the Mediterranean, and I soon realized there would inevitably be a three-cornered clash in the not too distant future between Vichy, the Germans and Weygand.

As I sipped black coffee sweetened with saccharine, I watched the throngs walking up and down the Rue d'Isly. They were well-dressed and healthy with the ruddy aspect of people living comfortably in an established colony. Many were probably thinking of where to spend their summer, as France and Paris, where many used to go, no longer were open to "French" vacation crowds. Natives in various walks of life and in all stages of sartorial adornment, moved along on the sidewalks or straggled along in the street as is their custom. Overloaded baskets of food went by on the arms of Arab boys and occasional fruit or vegetable vendors passed with wagons bulging with produce.

Before the sentry boxes of the 19th Regional Headquarters, I would occasionally see the big Buick of General Weygand. There would be a stiff rifle salute as he and his aides passed. The aviators who met at the bar in the Novelty were those of a greatly reduced French Air Force, since Italy especially had forced the number of French student aviators down to a ridiculous maximum. Happily, France still had a few thousand skilled fliers who could take to the controls on very short notice.

In the crowds that walked by there were hundreds of demobilized officers and soldiers, many of them refugees from France taking up new life in the colonies. I recognized

many faces from Paris. This was the "refugee" element which formed the nucleus of North African resistance to Germany and later to Vichy. The aviators who were still in uniform had been well sounded out as to their political attitude toward Vichy. Many of them were young and indifferent; others carefully concealed their hostility to Germany and the collaborationists.

There were two modern department stores adjacent to the café and they were full of unrationed goods and apparel. The Algiers restaurants in April were without restrictions of any kind, except for sugar, stores of which had been requisitioned. Coal was not coming from France and England, and the Moroccan mines were only beginning to speed up production. Consequently, electric current was curtailed and the cafés closed around ten p.m. Naturally, there was a shortage of motor fuel. But that was the limit of rationing in North Africa. People living in such happy abundance could hardly realize they would be almost as foodless and even as hungry as the population of France within less than a year. Those well-dressed Algerians could not foresee that the morning newspapers would be printing instructions about food cards, or in their news columns minimizing the near riots which occurred in front of shoe stores when a shipment of ersatz leather shoes came from the factories of the New Order in France.

I felt certain, however, that privations would come. I had slightly more than a strong hunch that as soon as the gentlemen in Vichy got around to it, they would consent to the

usual Axis policy of starvation. What is worse, as each product was dropped from circulation, as food became scarce, as store windows and shelves were emptied and privation made enforceable by law, the gentlemen in Vichy would excuse it all as acts of pious patriotism. They would not even hint that Germany and Italy were taking the food away from the French. Hitler's barefaced lies to his idolizing Germans and to the world used to be astounding examples of prevarication. But Vichy's vapid explanations, and its condonement of the starvation of Frenchmen, attained incredible heights of treachery and deception, all the more pathetic because the Vichyites must have known they were consenting to the slow demoralization of their countrymen and the certain atrophy of their spirit.

No official in Vichy, from Marshal Petain down, can explain the supine and subservient obedience to Germany, and no pro-Vichy Frenchman, here or abroad, has been able to laugh off the degradation which prevailed in that illegal, unrepresentative body which consented to replace the Third Republic.

The Algiers press reflected the Vichy spirit; in reading these papers my temperature was likely to go up, especially as there were signs on every hand that North Africa, like France, was in danger of being systematically pillaged, then occupied.

It was about this time, in the spring of 1941, that the Axis had finally discovered the real resources of the continent: its tremendous agricultural and mineral wealth, its sources

of hydro-electric power, its incalculable acreage under every climatic condition. They were now aware more than ever of its strategic importance. Moreover, it was part of the Nazi concept to dominate and colonize Africa as a part of overseas Germany. Nazi agents in plain clothes and in uniform had been running all over the three territories of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. The Italians had also been snooping around. They had established offshoots of their main Algerian armistice commission at Blida, a town and airport in the foothills back of Algiers, and at Biskra, an important oasis center toward the Sahara.

I believe the Germans will never forgive themselves for not having occupied North Africa immediately after the armistice—for they wanted Morocco still more than they wanted France.

It was plain, therefore, that the Axis was now looking with longing eyes on Africa. On the other hand, General Weygand was doing everything possible to save Africa from invasion. It seemed that even Vichy at that time, in 1941, was desirous of saving Africa. Marshal Petain was outwardly placating the Germans and had succeeded in building up the myth of an imminent British attack—but this gave General Weygand a chance to be Vichy's "watchdog against the British," whereas actually Weygand became a watchdog against the Germans.

The German Armistice Commission was increasing every day. The Germans in the Aletti were becoming more nu-

merous than the Italians, and they were to be seen much more often in their spectacular uniforms.

Then something especially significant happened. The American Chargé d'Affaires Murphy was assigned to permanent residence in Algiers. He moved into the splendid villa of the Consul General, Felix Cole, deep in the gardens of El Biar. A good many private little conferences took place between Murphy and Weygand; rumors were afloat of a Franco-American economic agreement.

The Algiers press, despite its Vichy facade, reflected considerable loyalty toward Weygand. The newspapers gave full publicity to Weygand's every move, whether it was an inspection trip to Tunis, the inauguration of a colonial officers school in the *bled*, or a mere promenade in the Kasbah. Weygand had supplied the need in North Africa for the presence of a strong man. He was unconsciously fulfilling the role of a leader, of a chief, of a real head of the government and not a mere *chef d'état* figurehead as Petain was.

Weygand was quickly transforming Algiers into a little Paris. That meant Morocco and Tunisia would soon become as French as Algeria, and before long there promised to be a new France in North Africa. Add to this the Sahara Desert and the four hundred oases which Frenchmen know like no one else on earth, and where they were still in complete military control, and encircle it on the south with the French Sudan, the Niger, and toward the Atlantic with French West Africa and Dakar, and what do you have?

You have a vast empire many times bigger than metropolitan France, peopled with unorganized natives who if governed correctly and humanely would provide a limitless supply of good labor. And unless I am a bad prophet, there is already an empire now suffering its growing pains in that part of Africa. We in the western world can be grateful that it is not German.

In April, 1941, the Frenchmen of Vichy had this prospect before them—the possibility of a second France in Africa. They could have let the Frenchmen there go ahead with it. They could still have kept their commitments with the Germans and the Italians. They had nothing to fear from either Germany or Italy. Both Axis partners were busy with British forces: the Italians in the Balkans, and both the Italians and Germans were fighting the British in the deserts of Egypt and Libya. And the United States was already discreetly tapping at the door of Africa. The United States was not at war, but it was sincerely out to help its friends in trouble. It had a Lend-Lease arrangement, it even had Selective Service coming into effect with prospects of a ten million man army, and it had already proposed helping the French colonies of North Africa.

But the gentlemen in Vichy thought only in terms of their own positions and of their furtive and slightly dishonorable deals with the Germans. They called it “respecting France’s signature.” What utter trash!

Before General Weygand went to Africa the Germans sounded out Marshal Petain as to a possible German occu-

pation of Morocco. The Marshal was still himself in those days and trying to see clear through the maze of pseudo-politics between French traitors and German bullies. The German ambassador to Paris, Herr Abetz, a thoroughly unprincipled rascal (if a Nazi needs describing), went to Petain and put the question to him. Abetz and a few other Nazis in glittering uniforms asked Marshal Petain what would happen if they should give the Vichy government a brief time ultimatum: eight or ten hours to decide whether or not Germany would be permitted to move into Morocco—which is to say, North Africa.

Marshal Petain had a sharp reply. Eight or ten hours was indeed too much time. "All I require," said the Marshal, "is about five minutes. That is the time I need to telephone Algiers and Toulon. A new French government will be set up in North Africa and the French fleet will act accordingly."

It is to be noted that no ultimatum followed.

The Germans were then on the verge of an attack on Greece and Yugoslavia and the British in North Africa under Wavell were still an undefeated force, having captured a good part of Mussolini's Libyan army. The Greeks, a valiant little nation, had flung the Italian invaders out of their country into Albania. Germany at this point could not afford to have the modern French fleet move against the Axis in the Mediterranean.

But that was about the last time the Marshal really got tough with Abetz. Collaboration was not going well enough,

and the Germans started working on that arch-traitor, Laval. I can think of few things more despicable than a pro-German Frenchman. Laval, who had enriched himself enormously in office, could afford a personal bodyguard—and he needed one. He was caught plotting against the person of Marshal Petain, and Petain had him arrested. The man who arrested Laval was General de Laurencie, a patriotic Frenchman who was acting as Vichy's representative in Paris.

When the dark, evil-looking Laval was in prison, his bosom pal, Herr Abetz, rushed to Vichy and insisted that the Marshal release him. Petain was helpless before such a combination of Nazi ruffian and French traitor. Laval was released. General de Laurencie resigned his post in a bravely eloquent letter to Petain. The next French "ambassador" to Paris was the pro-German Count de Brinon, who remained a long time. For a Frenchman, could there be any worse disgrace than to accept the post of French Ambassador to Paris?

I have a very distinct, almost photographic recollection of Pierre Laval, as politician from Auvergne, as Senator, Finance Minister, Foreign Minister, Premier of France, League of Nations delegate, and last of all, lone wolf in Bordeaux.

It was in 1929 when I first talked to Laval. He had returned to Paris after his historic conferences with President Hoover in Washington, over the question of canceling Germany's reparations. This took place later at the Lausanne

Conference, which I covered. Laval led the movement to cancel Germany's reparations, although this plan supposedly originated with President Hoover.

Thereafter Laval came and went in French politics. He was a singular figure. He was an Auvergnat from central France, where they say the toughest Frenchmen come from, and the thriftiest. The Auvergnat is the French Scotsman. But Laval was an off type. He was dark, as are most Auvergnats, but he was dark like an Egyptian or a Mongolian, with a shock of straight black hair, a sallow complexion, thick sensuous lips of a more negroid type, but quiet and reserved. Laval even dressed in a singular manner. Regardless of his apparel, which was always subdued, he invariably wore a fresh white linen tie, clean every morning and evening.

That he was abnormally acquisitive, there can be no doubt. An American diplomat who knew him well told me one day on the Normandie that Laval had made several million francs while he was Premier of France. Perhaps that might explain why this crafty politician was elected to the French Senate from two separate districts in 1937, though he naturally retained his constituency in Auvergne, and "relinquished" the other to a political friend. The French electoral laws permitted many comic practices.

In Paris Laval was back of many complicated political bargains in parliament, but my low estimate of him was first confirmed when he allowed himself to be bluffed by Mussolini in 1932 when Benito was howling for Tunisia,

for concessions to Italian residents and for other things from France. Instead of telling the Duce to "come and get it," Laval actually ceded a piece of Algerian territory to Italy to straighten up the frontier with Tripolitania. It was not valuable arable land, but nevertheless it was territory as big as the state of Georgia. Mussolini complained later that it was nothing but "authentic sand."

Laval, however, was bluffed out of countenance at the League of Nations session on Italy's invasion of Ethiopia. Laval openly fought every practical attempt of the League Council to apply real sanctions to Italy (which would have stopped the Fascists dead in their tracks). As French delegate, he again yielded to Mussolini. It was Laval who with Sir Samuel Hoare drew up the repartition plan for Ethiopia, designed to mollify Mussolini, which drew angry criticism from many nations. Laval was introducing an appeasement policy long before Neville Chamberlain flew to Hitler. Laval was a politician and not a statesman, not even a bad statesman.

These unflattering observations about Laval must obviously bring pain to that admirable woman who was José Laval, his daughter, who became the Countess de Chambrun. Laval was exceedingly fond of her; to those who knew them it seemed odd that there could be such a father and daughter. Singularly enough, the Countess de Chambrun had many close friends in international society who must be at pains to reconcile her intelligent and charming personality with that of her somber and sinister father.

The last time I saw Laval was on a dark day for France, the day the French were signing the armistice with Germany. I was in Bordeaux wondering where I should go next. Suddenly I saw the silent figure of Pierre Laval walking alone toward the Hotel Splendide. His hair had turned gray, but otherwise his manner was as sullen and disquieting as ever. He was deep in meditation, and I suspect he was familiar with every shift of the political scene.

Most of France's leaders were now dispersed, lost, dead or prisoners, but here was Laval, dark, brooding, ominous Laval, walking as he alone knew, to some definite and sinister goal.

During the first months of 1941, Vichy had fallen under almost complete domination by the Germans. I believed at first that Marshal Petain sincerely tried to effect a sort of psychological situation in which it might be implicit to Frenchmen to sit quiet, and play with the idea of a reformation in France through what Vichy was calling a "national revolution." Petain called for obedience and discipline; that was excellent. But when he called for blind obedience, and organized the Legion Francaise, an imitation Nazi party organization, he was playing into Hitler's hands and perverting patriotism.

The cabinet at Vichy was often a political flophouse for homeless turncoats. The good Frenchmen came and went, disgusted. The opportunists took anything that was offered and started immediately hailing the praises of blind obedience to the Marshal. The Marshal's picture, his plaster bust

and his words were to be seen everywhere in France and the colonies, as were pictures of Hitler in Germany and Mussolini in Italy.

Admiral Darlan was elevated after Laval's arrest to the post of Vice Premier. For a time he was the legal successor to Petain. He filled Vichy with naval officers and promoted almost any captain or commander who would work for him to at least the rank of Vice Admiral. One ranking naval officer was even made prefect of police of Paris. What a job for a naval expert!

Admiral Darlan showed a dubious loyalty to his country when he acquiesced to the Vichy government's arrangements with Japan concerning the settlement of the dispute between Indo-China and Thailand (Siam). As the third member of the Axis group, Japan had started early in corrupting the government of Siam. There had been a border incident between Siam and French Indo-China in which the French had administered a sound thrashing to the Siamese. French Indo-Chinese gunboats had won a distinct naval battle and the Siamese had been beaten.

Vichy agreed, however, to a settlement in which high Japanese officers acted as "disinterested" arbitrators. The armistice which was concluded actually granted territory to Siam. One of the Algerian newspapers had the temerity to comment that this was probably the first case on record in which a victorious nation granted its own territory to a defeated enemy. I tried to cable this to America but, if I recall rightly, my dispatch was "delayed." Admiral Darlan

made absolutely no visible effort to protect Indo-China, nor did the Marshal, nor did anyone in Vichy. On the contrary the press was filled with Nazi-dictated slush about the whole business, particularly as to how wonderful the Japanese arbitrators had been in re-establishing peace.

The Vichy mentality now knew no shame. Admiral Darlan, who had always been conspicuous as one of those French naval "stuffed shirts" born to hate England, submitted wholeheartedly to the German anti-British hate campaign. He did not lift a finger to give France's former ally even a fair measure of justice. Petain and Darlan both allowed bad taste, bad sportsmanship, and certainly bad manners to prevail in the repeated Nazi attacks on England in the French press.

The Indo-Chinese situation culminated in the amazing collaboration of Vichy with Tokyo, in which the Japanese were permitted to set up a "joint" defense of Indo-China with the French. This last bit of Vichy double-crossing buffoonery gave the Japs the magnificent harbor of Can Ranh, one of the four great naturally defended harbors in the world, and from which the Japs later operated attacks against the United States in the Pacific.

This show of the French government's gratitude toward the United States was quickly seized upon by Assistant Secretary of State Sumner Welles, who issued an official statement asserting that Washington could no longer depend on the word of the French government at Vichy. Darlan, or some one of those depraved collaborationists, had

previously given our embassy assurances that no such capitulation would ever be made to the Japanese without consulting us.

Admiral Darlan thus qualified as a regular member of the "Give Away France" group in Vichy, which later found its most abject member in Pierre Laval.

The foregoing facts about the Vichy government in early 1941 are not presented here in documentary precision, but they are well documented in my memory. It is only a cursory picture of Vichy at the time General Weygand was trying to serve France in North Africa. I give it in this quick form to show, merely, that Weygand the patriot Frenchman was in Algiers handling a situation which still held hope for France. But the odds were against him. His position, it was obvious, would not long be tolerated, either by Vichy, or by Herr Abetz, or by any of the other feld-grau fuehrers in France.

Chapter Eight

Vichy Was Not France

EVERY city and town in French North Africa now had its Boulevard Marshal Petain, just as had towns of France. In almost every community the usual Place de la Republique was changed to some name in which Vichy could read collaboration. But it takes more than the mere changing of the name of a street to alter the thinking processes of a people.

The Vichy government was rapidly taking on the ostrich mentality of the Germans. The Nazi ideology, with the Nuremberg laws conceived in racial hatred, and all the other decrees stemming from the inferiority complexes latent in the self-proclaimed "supermen," were all faithfully adapted for the French, and were set up in principle at least for French North Africa. However, despite this attempt at what Hitler called "collaboration," France was still too civilized to become German.

When I left Algiers the old Place de la Republique was still adorned with its original blue and white name plates over which a cross in thin red paint had been brushed. The new Vichy name plates had been nailed above the others,

and it would be quite easy to remove the new ones and rub off the red paint from the old ones. It all looked decidedly temporary.

It was indeed a job to shift over from the *Republique* to the *État Français*, or French State. All those unreadable rubber stamps in the post offices, in the Prefectures of Police and at the frontiers had to be reworked with the name *État Français*, although they would continue to be just as illegible. In many places on public buildings the familiar R. F. for *Republique Française* had been so deeply graven into marble or granite that it would simply have to stay. All the current money, even the new notes put out by the treasury, continued to bear the name of the French *Republique*.

That spurious veterans' organization called the *Legion Française*, formed according to Nazi ideas, had adopted the motto of the Marshal: *Famille, Travail, Patrie* (Family, Work, Country). To this was added the insignia of the Legion, a double-edged axe recalling the Fascist Party symbol, except that the Italian insignia has a single blade. This Legion insignia was also used with the phrase, "Revolution Nationale." The motto *Famille, Travail, Patrie* was smeared everywhere, and wherever possible it replaced the great slogan of the republic, of *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*.

In Algiers the Legion motto was painted in colossal letters along the inside of the jetty, visible from most parts of the city. I hope General Giraud has painted out this dismal

remembrance and replaced it with the motto of the Republic which sprang from the real French Revolution.

These evidences of Vichy one noticed in Algiers but paid little heed to them. It was not until later when the colonial administration, the Governor General's office, the Prefectures, and part of the Army and Navy had been jammed with Vichy appointees, that the collaboration effort became genuinely unbearable. But in the early summer of 1941 the Vichy authority in Algeria was a colonial burlesque. We spent our time in cafés, at garden parties, teas and cocktails, and fine dinners. As in all wealthy colonial places, there was much entertaining. The weather was delightful, and all the more enjoyable because so many were used to the harsh European winters, so that life seemed like an endless vacation.

At the same time, most of those with whom I was in contact showed a certain fatalism toward these Lotos-eating days in Algiers. Sometimes after a wonderful French repast, lasting two or three hours through fine wines and liqueurs and black coffee (with sugar), we used to speculate about just when such a dinner might be our last.

Everyone knew that this old France, so to speak, here in Algiers, could not last under such a regime as prevailed at Vichy, or in the Nazi New Order. People were too happy, there was too much contentment, one could speak one's mind. It was like Paris before the Germans arrived. We knew German and Italian armies were fighting across the

Mediterranean in Yugoslavia and Greece and just down the African coast toward Egypt, to enslave the world, to set up a regime of Nazi and Fascist terror, to remake human life in terms of medieval bondage. We knew, as we sat around the dinner table in Algiers, witnessing the vanishing elegance of other days, that an Axis victory meant nothing more than a clammy political party regime, and the propping up of a dummy fuehrer or an overstuffed duce burning with superhuman vanity, thriving on the organized cheers of an organized mob.

That was the attitude of practically every intelligent man or woman I met in North Africa. Those who had escaped from France did not have to call on their imaginations. The French who lived in North Africa in comfortable circumstances were not hard to convince.

And there were always new ones arriving from France. It was a delight to be with them the first few days, for they did nothing but eat and drink and tell funny stories of Vichy—and I should add, ask serious questions about America.

There were stories and stories about collaboration, some good, some bad, some complicated, some risqué. But there was one universal story, told by everyone and understood by everyone, from the simplest native herder to the Governor General. It was told to me the first time by one of General Weygand's personal friends, not a member of his staff.

"Collaboration is this," he said. "You give me your watch

and I'll give you the time." My friend added, with a twinkle in his eyes, "Naturally, I keep the watch."

That day we were having aperitifs on the terrace of the fine old Café Terminus, in one of the arcaded corners that face the port, almost opposite the French Line piers. A passenger ship was coming in from France, an event always interesting to watch, because everyone was there to greet the new arrivals. It was also an event never missed by the representatives of the German and Italian Commissions. Their specialty was watching ships, both arriving and departing.

Looking out to sea we noticed that some sign painters, many of them Arabs, were busy painting in huge letters along the length of the jetty, that new motto of the Legion: Famille, Travail, Patrie, with the Legion's insignia far at the right. It was an enormous painting job. My friend observed, "We cannot have paint for our leaky roofs or our sunburned doors. Paint contains precious war chemicals. But the government can waste barrels of paint putting up that absurd slogan of Vichy on a jetty where, I hope, the sun and sea will soon take it off."

My friend then pointed with his hand, "Look at those Arabs helping the painters. The followers of the Prophet must be profoundly impressed." This friend of Weygand was a realistic, honest Frenchman. Something amused him. The wrinkles bunched about his eyes. "The Arabs, you know," he said laughing, "know *all* about collaboration—with the French, the British, and the Italians."

The French ship coming in was rounding the buoy and the row of barges, lashed end on end, which locked the harbor, was being opened so the ship could get into port. It was a wartime precaution that was still being observed. We wandered down to the wharf level and watched the new arrivals. I could realize how these hundreds of French people felt, for they had come from Marseilles. With my weeks of gourmandizing, in Algiers, I was gradually getting back the thirty-five pounds I had lost. The rehabilitation of one's physical condition produces a splendid sense of well-being, when one has been starved for months and deprived of many necessary vitamins. I could sympathize with the eagerness of these people to get ashore. All came hungry.

Every boat that slipped through the well-patrolled Mediterranean, every plane that dropped down from the surcharged ether, brought hungry people, very hungry people. Travelers, refugees, officials, men, women, children, all those lucky enough to obtain visas from France, officers, soldiers, Arabs, all landed with that lean and anxious look. I can still see them. The months of rationing in Metropolitan France, the endlessly changing ration cards and the universal restrictions of everything from washing soap to cigarettes, fades suddenly for them into the past like a bad dream and their elation shines from their eyes. A polite restraint prevents them from raiding the first sandwich bar they see in the Rue d'Isly. It is hard to realize those piles of hard-boiled eggs, those stacks of thick, meaty sandwiches, those omelettes and fried potatoes, those chunks of Roquefort and

Gruyere, can be had without tickets. The thinning waists of the adults, the slow, sure atrophy of the children through months of semi-famine induces a gradual acceptance of the foodless existence. So when they arrive, they usually inquire almost timidly if all that food is merely window dressing, or if they can really have all they want of it. The Algerians tell them, yes, that they can have all they want, but they add their little complaints and grievances about the local restrictions of fuel and coal and sugar. But the people from France look with bland astonishment over the menus or the price lists above the lunch bars and wonder if they have gone to heaven by mistake.

Except for a few prohibitively expensive restaurants in Paris, patronized by the Germans, the world-famous French cuisine had sought a refuge in French North Africa and especially in Algiers. There it took up the struggle against scientific rationing. When I left people were predicting marvelous new inventions in cooking such as devolved out of the foodless days of the Prussian siege of Paris—although I suspect that the American occupation rescued and liberated the French cuisine as well as the people.

Like many of France's contributions to civilization, the art of cooking was distinctly threatened with extinction by the German invasion and the subsequent requisitioning of food. Many good cooks came over to North Africa, and the metropolis of Algiers was thus blessed with this rare feature of Parisian life.

In the summer of 1941 there were about a dozen fine

restaurants in Algiers which would do credit to Paris in the best days of the Old Order. There at the source of so many prime food staples the restaurants could still revel in the rich variety of the French kitchen. And with rationing by ticket still non-existent, the connoisseurs of good food still could sit in judgment on the chefs and safeguard the high standard of excellence they knew in France. And those white-capped disciples of Brillat-Savarin could still mix their sauces and brown their delicious casseroles and grillades with the dexterous perfection of the master chefs.

Anyone frequenting the good restaurants of Algiers soon noted the familiar faces of the French and Algerian gourmets who made the rounds of these oases of good food. As they arrived hungry from France, Frenchmen would first, as I did, go in for a "cure" in the best restaurants which they would attack with unblushing immoderation.

For the first culinary onslaught, local friends would usually take the famished arrival to what was regarded as not the best but the most impressive of these restaurants, Pascals. Unlike the famous Pascals in Marseilles, little or no attention was paid to the more elegant amenities of table etiquette. In fact, there were not even tablecloths, and there was a heavy atmosphere of boiling, stewing, frying, grilling food in meaty abundance. There was a lofty disregard for waste or overserving. There, the *entrecôte* which the Frenchman had not seen for more than a year, lopped over the plate because it was so large, and the fried potatoes spilled over the side of the plate against the big bottle of pink wine

or an inordinately huge length of bread which the busy waiters had not had time to slice. Pascals was frequented by husky people who liked to eat first and talk afterward and it was not expensive.

After the first gorgings at Pascals the appeased Frenchman was ready for a little more refinement and an *entrecôte* less extensive as to acreage but superior in succulence and tenderness, so he would drop into the Café Anglais. There were big ample tables glittering with crystal and silver service and the waiters tiptoe about as if afraid of frightening away one's appetite. The Anglais was expensive but was one of the best frequented restaurants in Algiers. There one found the wealthy long-resident colonials drinking champagne with their meals, dining off capon or lobster or an inch-and-a-quarter steak with potatoes and Brussels sprouts or tender green string beans. Many of Weygand's delegation came to the Anglais as well as the important gentry who arrived occasionally from Vichy.

After this initial introduction to culinary refinement the newcomer would inevitably find the restaurant of the Hotel Oasis. There one could settle down with a sigh of contentment and perhaps some nostalgia for Paris. The Oasis was captained by the most competent maitre d'hotel in Algiers, who naturally had come from a de luxe hotel in Cannes. In this restaurant everything was of the Old Order. It is situated directly on the quay, and the view of the Mediterranean and the harbor is splendid. It had an air both of Maxime's and that precious old restaurant Voisin and at

night its red plush curtains were drawn and its cream-colored lamps and carpeted floor together with its impeccable service took one back on an Arabian Night's rug to Paris. There was no music, but there was complete harmony in the tinkle of the crystal and china and in the deft uncorkings by the wine steward. The Oasis was the most Parisian of Algiers' restaurants and after the *dorade flambée*—a sort of grilled fish served on a burning pyre of aromatic twigs—the Frenchman from France was again in his normal state of gastronomic well-being and he could view the world situation with a logical mind.

After the Oasis the restaurants were usually chosen because of their specialties or clientele. One of the best and most popular restaurants was Chez Charles, a little box of a place with a balcony and a bar and a few tables with sawdust on the floor. The tender milk-fed veal roast at Charles was famous, and in order to find room there, one came early or very late, as it was always crowded. In most restaurants of Algiers there were no half bottles of wine. One had to accept a full bottle and drink without stint, for Charles, blessed Charles, considered wine the same as water, only more important.

Across the street from Charles was Bernard. Wearing an oldish-looking sweater, and a jaunty blue beret, Bernard wafted back and forth from behind his bar, ministering to his faithful clientele and giving a practiced eye to a Sole Meuniere, cooked with butter, or seeing that the Gruyere was sliced amply enough to meet the hungry customer's

hopes. Bernard's was always crowded. Waiting for tables there was an excuse to dally longer at the bar for an extra aperitif, or to admire his enormous artichokes which was an hors-d'oeuvres specialty eaten raw.

There was also the Café Restaurant Laferriere, called the "Laff," across from the white Moorish General Post Office facing the palm-studded Garden beneath the war monument. The "Laff" specialized in filets and roasts and in addition has a big terrace on the Rue d'Isly at the busiest part of this main thoroughfare. At one time it was said that more pretty girls passed the "Laff" over a given time than at any other place in the world. This lacked official confirmation, however.

After the "Laff" was a new restaurant called Lucullus, much frequented by the Italian Commission and as its name suggests, Lucullus is no disappointment. It is large and cool and at the entrance there was a big table covered with Lucullan delights such as big red lobsters, enormous Algerian freestone peaches, a cold fish with mayonnaise and other tasty bits which, on receiving the check, one learned were not exactly gratuitous. Lucullus was a nice place to go, perhaps with a pretty companion for one of those intimate chats, for the wines were heady and copious and it is probably haunted by the shade of Petronius.

For the more substantial menus there was Chez Pillar, near the United States Consulate, where Alsatian specialties were served; and the Taverne Alsacienne, a somewhat similar place, both dealing in big plates of sauerkraut and

Moselle wine, but the sauerkraut fell off with the war and clients had to content themselves with steaks and maybe now and then a hot onion pie.

Right in the center of the Rue d'Isly was the Brasserie de l'Etoile, which reminds one of a railroad station restaurant but which was a dependable eating place run by the Baroli Brothers. And there was Louis, former barman of the Boulogne Casino, speaking excellent English oftentimes, much to the horror of certain extreme collaborationists at nearby tables. Louis was a good Frenchman who said he liked Englishmen and Americans and felt sorry for his wrecked home in Boulogne and the good old days of the Casino and the Channel boats from Folkestone.

There were other good restaurants such as the Restaurant d'Isly where they served Armagnac from an enormous bottle and the old Chapon Fin which boasted the biggest shrimps on the coast; the Brasserie Victor Hugo, beneath ancient palms; the Ours Blanc, which is Russian; the Egyptian Restaurant near the Kasbah for sweet desserts; and the Baghdad, patronized by a mixed clientele of Europeans and Arabs where one ate the best Cous Cous, with a burning spice sauce. And far down in the populous Bab el Oued quarter, where Jewish families predominated, there was Chez Maurice, where brochettes of kidney and tiny grilled sausages were eaten in profusion and washed down with unlabeled white wine.

Before food rationing struck the city there was every kind of produce to occupy the chefs. But gradually and conspicu-

ously all this disappeared. As a period of near famine loomed, those of the population who disliked the Vichyites learned to hate them. Those who already hated them in France, learned to hate them even more as they saw food and sustenance again swept away to be consumed in the maw of the Axis.

American occupation must have stopped the flow of North Africa's meats and grains and vegetables and fruits into Axis commissaries. There should be enough for all, and I know that there must be again joy and celebration in the kitchens where the art of French cooking will be maintained and preserved in all its savory glory.

The Axis should realize that to starve a nation is bound to engender hatred; but to starve a nation like France, with its tradition of good food, good wine and good living, can only create a permanent enemy.

Chapter Nine

The Real French Press

THERE is no doubt that the majority of the population of French North Africa was friendly toward American intervention on their shores and that units would not have resisted had they not been ordered to fire by Fascist-minded Vichy officers. There are thousands of decent Frenchmen who deeply deplore this melancholy fact and many who have had the opportunity to talk have assured us of their loyalty. I am persuaded that there is some truth to the stories of French gunners who said "they did not shoot very straight," when ordered to fire on Americans.

By the time the Americans landed in November, however, there was an important pro-Vichy element installed, and many were in the officers' corps, the ones who command and who give orders. Both Vichy and Germany had worked patiently in Algiers and in Morocco to build up a sentiment against America and England. Moreover, in Morocco, the German Armistice Commission had been busy checking on Vichy appointees and on the Resident Governor, General Nogues.

As in Algeria, I found the people of Morocco very

friendly, but there was a harsh sprinkling of Nazi-Frenchmen there in office, especially at Rabat and at Casablanca. The press was eagerly watched by a French Nazi who was still causing trouble months after the Americans had landed. He finally was forcibly removed under General Giraud's authority, but not until then. General Nogues had done nothing to hinder the activities of this objectional animal.

Two solid years of German-Vichy propaganda had somewhat muddled the minds of the Europeans in North Africa. Anglo-Saxon sympathy was a hazard which often meant the loss of a job. Also there were plenty of out-of-work collaborationists willing to take other men's places and push French Fascism in the colonies. The race of cretins is not yet extinct. And in this twisting of the mass mind against its natural bent, the press always plays an essential role. At this task the Germans are expert in technique but clumsy and ridiculous in practice.

The first thing the Germans did when they defeated France was to stifle the press and radio and then proceed to corrupt them. By stifling I mean that a free French press was prohibited; by corrupting the press, I mean using it tactically and psychologically to spread Nazi propaganda.

In Paris and occupied France the press was simply German news translated into French. In unoccupied France, the press was subjected to severe censorship imposed on Vichy by the Germans. When a newspaper in unoccupied France printed news favorable to Germany's enemies or

revealed even an attitude contrary to orders from Vichy, it was suspended for one day or more.

In the colonies and especially in Algiers, which can be taken as an example of long-distance control, the press reflected the usual *consigne*, or policy line, dictated by Vichy. But being away from direct Nazi supervision, the colonial press was the most liberal and one might say, the most French.

In addition to the liberal and anti-Vichy *Echo d'Alger* and the pro-German *Depeche Algerienne*, there was an afternoon newspaper in Algiers called *Les Dernieres Nouvelles*. It was owned by the same wealthy colonial family group as owned the smugly reactionary *Depeche Algerienne*, but curiously enough, *Les Dernieres Nouvelles*, was anti-Vichy and staunchly anti-German. I don't need to say it was anti-Italian.

The difference between being pro-Vichy and anti-Vichy was observable solely in the subtleties, however, as all newspapers were forced to print the daily news handouts from Vichy. But skilled journalists, and certainly French journalists, have a way of turning a phrase or of emphasizing a point which the constant reader soon detects and understands.

The staffs of all three of the Algiers newspapers were, in the majority, anti-German. They had been recruited in part from the French newspapermen who had come from Paris to escape German occupation, and among them were some

genuine, pro-French Frenchmen. Only the editor of one, *La Depeche Algerienne*, was frankly and nobly pro-Hitler; that was Pierre-Louis Ganne, and he was the son of the composer of the Lorraine March, one of France's patriotic anthems!

I know that at least on one occasion the United States Consul General proposed that the State Department protest the anti-American attitude of Editor Ganne, inasmuch as he wrote daily editorials which not only reflected the pro-German policy of Vichy but which were regularly aimed to sever completely existing bonds of Franco-American friendship. Towards our ally, Great Britain, Ganne showed a crass discourtesy.

I cite this journalist because in all the Algiers press he was the one who could always be counted on so to lend himself to ridicule. It might have interested this collaborationist to know that on many occasions, while dining or drinking with journalist colleagues of the Algiers press, I have heard these Frenchmen refer to editor Ganne as a "vieille sardine." I might add that to allude to a man as an old sardine is not exactly a compliment.

Here is one sample of the pro-German stuff that this important editor unloosed in the Algiers press. It was after the United States had moved on Iceland. The Vichy press had just subsided after one of its rabid series of attacks on Britain for its "cowardly assaults on France," when the United States stole a march on Germany and established

the base in Iceland. So editor Ganne headed his editorial for this event, "Uncle Sam Has Long Teeth." The editorial said in part, and only in part, though it was offensive to the very end: "In this gigantic game of grab, the White House hopes more and more openly to obtain its share of the loot.

"The pretexts formed in Washington are no longer viewed with any illusions in London where Churchill has evinced singular reactions to this American occupation of Iceland. Revealing the apprehension manifested by the British Prime Minister, the newspaper, *La Suisse*, of Geneva, has observed, 'If we may venture an interpretation, it is that however satisfied England may be to see United States material assured of delivery, it must deeply resent the moves which bring America closer to Europe. And when England hears the suggestions of Wendell Willkie for American bases in Northern Ireland and Scotland, it must think that American solicitude is extreme, not to say excessive.' Such is the ransom which London must pay to be assured of carrying on the war."

In this same long editorial, editor Ganne mildly charged President Roosevelt with casting covetous eyes on the Azores, the Cape Verde Islands, Dakar and Casablanca, and then the editorial cites the French Fascist leader, Colonel de la Roque, in his newspaper, *Le Petit Journal*, saying: "As for Dakar, de Laroque writes in the *Petit Journal*, 'The heroic example of the Levant can only prove that we have still the cult of our flag as well as respect for our honor. Marshal Petain has given his word to defend the

French Empire and it is not an empty formula.'” Then Ganne continues:

“The last report of General Boisson attests that the system of protection at Dakar has been entirely consolidated since the British attack and we can hope that an efficacious defense is foreseen in case of a menace by Great Britain which we alone in the press denounced in an article on June 18th. Several indications have also shown that the Gold Coast might be well worth watching.”

The editorial still goes on to say, for editor Ganne was a tireless worker for the Axis: “According to the Tribune of Geneva, ‘This last aggression by America is not dissociated with the Franco-Spanish conference between Generals Nogues and Orgaz. One can realize that a military collaboration was arranged during those conversations in view of a possible attack by force of arms.’ This collaboration, according to certain circles in Spain, could even be extended to the conflict in the Mediterranean. In the same domain, the Fuehrer has acted accordingly on assurances from M. de Brinon, regarding the defense of French West Africa.”

A careful reading of the editorial will show how the writer went out of his way to touch on subjects and deal with them from Germany's angle. Let us consider the items one by one. First, it is plain that both England and America are treated with hostility and that American “imperialism” is taken to task. For this the writer borrows a paragraph from the reputedly pro-German newspaper, *La Suisse*,

French honor is deftly handled in a quotation from Colonel de la Roque, leader of the Fascist-Royalist movement in France whose mouthpiece is the *Petit Journal*.

Vichy's flagrant concessions to Germany in Syria which resulted in British occupation are covered in the mock heroics about the Levant. In this quotation from de la Roque, Marshal Petain is used in an obvious warning to Americans to keep out of Africa, since he has given his word to defend the French Empire.

Then editor Ganne touches on Dakar, indicating that Governor General Boisson is now ready to defend it against British attack. The editorial concludes with an entirely misleading interpretation of a routine conference between Resident General Nogues of Morocco and the Spanish Resident General Orgaz of Spanish Morocco. This is gleaned from another reportedly pro-German Swiss newspaper, the *Tribune of Geneva*, and the false implication is that Spain might join the Axis in the Mediterranean. The whole editorial is blessed with the prospect of the Fuehrer and the French Ambassador to Paris in tacit agreement regarding a mutual defense of French West Africa.

Both editor Ganne and his typical editorial obtain more space in this book than they merit, but I want to illustrate the type of Axis or Nazi propaganda that flowed daily from the hands of at least one influential North African editor and over a period of many months. The principal publisher of both the *Depeche Algerienne* and the *Dernieres Nouvelles* was a wealthy land owner and business man and

apparently looked upon this Vichy consigne as a privilege and a duty. As for his editor, Monsieur Ganne never tried to conceal his belief in the Nazi New Order. I suppose one might say he was intellectually honest.

To illustrate further the kind of mental poison to which French North Africans were subjected since the Franco-German armistice, I quote just one more effusion of Ganne, as symptomatic of Germany's psychological warfare. This editorial, on the front page of the *Depeche Algerienne*, commemorated the first anniversary of Marshal Petain's sad meeting with Adolf Hitler at Montoire in October 1940, where that monstrous project of collaboration was agreed upon.

Monsieur Ganne was evidently upset about the constantly growing sympathy of the average Frenchman for the cause of the United Nations and he wishes therefore to warn his fellow citizens that this is not the time to put their faith in chimerical dreams and that they should face the facts. It was during October 1941 when the German armies first moved into Russia. The editorial starts:

"For several weeks past Berlin has clearly indicated satisfaction with the results of operations on the Eastern front and the forthcoming inclusion in European autarchy of the agricultural and industrial riches of the Ukraine, permitting the Reich to undertake the organization of the continent and in particular the problem of Franco-German relations.

"An atmosphere of optimism seems to pervade the first anniversary of the historic interview of Montoire and already

certain facts:—resumption of consular relations—French participation in the Leipsic Fair—German participation in the Lyons Fair—the first contacts of Minister of the Interior Pierre Pucheu with the forbidden zone—and Admiral Darlan's visit to Brittany—all can be considered as good indications. With the best intentions in the world a certain number of persons continue, however, to insist on their persistent immutability nurtured in selfish propaganda. According to an expression of Admiral Darlan, "They continue to count on external hopes which diminish as time passes.' Instead of following this chimera and waiting for the miracle to happen, let us meditate on the reflections suggested by the recent conference of London by the sagacious Swiss commentator Eddie Bauer, who observed:

" 'It is the easiest thing in the world to understand the legitimate point of view of the Poles, the Norwegians, the Danes, the Belgians, the Greeks and the Yugoslavs who refuse, not without pride, to accept foreign domination and who hope with all their hearts for the first rays of light of a new era of liberty and independence, but what we understand less easily, even putting ourselves in their places, is the feelings of regret they have for their defunct democratic institutions.' "

To dissect the foregoing bit of deathless prose, let us review the items which the writer offers as evidences of optimism which he says can be considered as "good indications." He mentions first the resumption of consular

relations between Germany and France. No peace had yet been signed between France and Germany; they were merely in a state of armistice, so a consulate could only serve as a legalized rendezvous for spies. He mentions French participation in the Leipsic Fair and German participation in the Lyons Fair. One can imagine what great hives of international industry and commerce these two fairs must have been with most of the nations of the world at war against Germany and on the other hand, with France's main industries looted, wrecked and devastated by collaborationist Germany.

The editor also calls attention to the first contacts of the Minister of the Interior Pierre Pucheu with the forbidden zone. This was indeed a privilege. It meant that the Minister of the Interior was actually allowed to visit several provinces of France—his own country—which Germany, the invader, had designated as the forbidden zone. Monsieur Pucheu's visit must have been just one love feast after another.

The editorial then boasts of Admiral Darlan's visit to Brittany, the land of sailors and fishermen forced to submit to German naval authority. It was a moot question for months as to whether Darlan could visit Brittany and not get himself assassinated by liberty-loving Bretons. He finally got off and was whisked through under heavy guard and surprised everyone by getting out alive, though it was hardly a surprise to the world when he was assassinated later in Algiers. This notorious naval officer redeemed himself nobly

after General Eisenhower's arrival, although his fate must have been sealed through those many acts of collaboration which won him ill fame in Vichy.

As to the last part of this editorial, I am constrained to let pass into consuming oblivion the faint anxiety of the sagacious Swiss commentator Eddie Bauer and his apprehensions for the defunct democracies.

One read these pro-Axis editorials in the North African press and wondered just how journalists could continue to prostitute their art, if indeed it is an art. It becomes obvious that the totalitarian journalist must live entirely without scruples, without conscience and without pride, producing, as Hitler has said, always the "big lies," not the little ones. And for this task there has been no lack of inspired leadership. We point (but not with pride) to a trio of beauties: Joseph Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment, for the Germans; Virginio Gayda, brass trumpet for the victorious Fascists; and Paul Marion, ex-communist, turncoat, opportunist *par excellence* and Minister of Information for Vichy.

Appearing day after day, this mental manure is bound to have some effect. It was most pernicious in the form of editorial propaganda. The flagrant pro-German news which saturated the columns of the daily press dealt mainly with brilliant German victories, cowardly British attacks, "futile" American diplomacy and the inefficiency of the democracies. Most of the pro-Axis headlines were read as obvious propaganda and were not believed by the majority. But the

editorials did affect the more influential reader, the employer of labor, the industrial proprietor, the rich farmer and many of the French-speaking better-class Arabs.

In almost every city of North Africa and on almost every newspaper there was one little Laval who could be counted on to poison the reader with such collaborationist trash. But in spite of this, the men who made up the newspaper fraternity were loyal for the most part and unlike Pierre Laval, they did not pray for a German victory.

To give a clear idea as to how Germany methodically polluted the French mind, I submit the Vichy system for the distribution of news and news censorship under collaboration. This information comes direct from many good friends who were staff members of North African newspapers and who were in daily touch with the government officials of the Ministry of Information. It also comes from staff members of the OFI, that Germanized alphabetical designation for the Office of French Information, corresponding to the German DNB and the Italian Agenzia Stefani, and other official news bureaus of the Axis countries. The accuracy of dispatches emanating from the DNB, the OFI or Stefani can hardly be described as coming from unimpeachable sources. In France it was the old Havas Agency, a state-subsidized news organization which was perverted by the Vichy Germans to become the OFI. Happily the OFI ceased to exist under the new French regime in the colonies.

So here was the news under Petain: All outside or tele-

graph news (except local items) came to the newspapers from two sources, direct from the Vichy Ministry of Information or from the OFI news headquarters at Clermont-Ferrand in unoccupied France.

All obvious policy news, such as war news interpretations, editorials, certain cabinet announcements, anti-British and anti-American propaganda and much of the Paris collaborationist rubbish, came to the telegraph rooms of the newspapers over direct wires from the Ministry of Information, Paul Marion's headquarters in Vichy. Speeches, routine declarations, new laws to be promulgated came to the newspapers over direct wires from the OFI. Each newspaper had its own telegraphic address, that of the *Depeche Algerienne* being something like Geriale, so that all news intended specifically to corrupt the minds of the Algerians was Geriale news.

Local news and North African items came direct from a string of correspondents posted in important centers or was brought in by reporters of whom there were few. Whenever a cabinet minister went on a junket or when some world-crashing event occurred in the Vichy regime, it was covered by special news and radio reporters assigned direct from Vichy.

Most of the telegraph news had already been approved and edited by censorship officials in France before going on the wires, and its publication was more or less automatically certain. Local news, that is, when ordered by a local editor, had to be carefully read by a special assistant who knew by

heart the Vichy policy line. Later all news was taken in galley proofs to the local censorship office, in the Hotel Cornouilles for Algiers, to be again looked over. None of this news could get into the newspaper, however, until a man from the censorship office had called at the newspaper office just before press time and gone carefully over the page proofs and given his final okay.

In other words, all news, articles and editorials, regardless of the source, were subjected to a last-minute view by this important gent who came in late. He had been telephoning Vichy several times during the day. He carried the latest instructions, for in this delicate control of human thought, any item might suddenly be deemed bad even after it had been wired from Vichy. Or it may have been also that the German press censor in Vichy was having an extra long dinner and was in a killing mood when he returned to work. This last local censor also told the editors what news must be on page one, how many columns wide each spread story must be, how much or how little of the various anti-Axis stories could be played up. In some cases the censor even provided the editor with the actual text of the headlines and the subheads and banks, as we call them in newspaper parlance. The so-called anti-Axis stories were not real anti-German or anti-Italian news. They were the routine dispatches from Washington or London such as an expurgated speech of President Roosevelt, a statement by Prime Minister Churchill, war production items or crime news. They loved to print crime stories from America.

When the dictated headline did not fit the newspaper's big type requirements it could be altered, but only on condition that the propaganda sense was not changed. This was a little attention that Vichy attended to most diligently. For instance, the doings of the Luftwaffe were always in big type heads while the claims of the RAF were in small type and usually buried somewhere inside. Axis defeats were rarely mentioned, if ever.

While General Weygand was in office, there was also a Weygand *consigne* and for a while the General exercised his own supervision over the North African press. For example, no newspaper was allowed to mention Weygand's name or report his activities without prior submission to his press office. These instructions were more scrupulously observed than even the Vichy control, since Weygand was on the spot and would not hesitate to crack down. And curiously enough, in many instances, Weygand's policy ran counter to that of Vichy.

This Weygand *consigne* was a joy to most of the newspapermen, although it might have disturbed the conformist editors and publishers. Weygand prohibited any newspaper in North Africa from referring to Hitler as Commander-in-Chief of the German armies. He ordered erased every mention of the word Italian in the German communiques telling of the advances of the German-Italian forces. He forbade publication of any news of those few Frenchmen who joined the German-organized Legion against Bolshevism and which fought in German uniforms against Russia. Weygand also

refused to print any appeals for recruiting in this Legion, as he feared especially that the induction of Arab soldiers might lead to their being spoiled by higher pay and German propaganda. Weygand was engaged on a far-reaching program to improve the economic condition of the Arabs in North Africa and not in Germany as cannon fodder.

General Weygand was also critical of the Vichy government's anti-American policy for the news and he definitely checked a German-inspired press campaign to ridicule and belittle America and the accomplishments of Democracy. One newspaper was threatened with indefinite suspension when it inaugurated this campaign with four anti-American display stories on the first page, including a pointless slur against Mrs. Roosevelt. I believe the anti-American campaign lasted exactly one day in Algiers while General Weygand was there.

There was one consigne in which Weygand agreed with Vichy and that was the rule against printing in the North African press any news of the food shipments to France, that is to say, to Germany. Consequently, when the ships left from Oran bulging with grain or when they slid out of Algiers loaded with wine and eggs and farm produce, there was no mention of it in the newspapers. The effect of these shipments was observable, however, in empty shelves and abbreviated restaurant menus somewhat later.

There was a gay and witty corps of newspapermen in Algiers who never ceased to rail at Vichy and its absurd censorship. We had our little restaurants and bars about

town, and the odium of defeat was alleviated by these almost daily brainstormers in which the ineffable spirit of the boulevards and of Paris journalism was evoked over copious draughts of wine. I cannot repeat too many of these tales nor mention many names, as some of the men have returned to France "to do what they can," and they would be targets for German reprisals. All I can say is that new names and phrases were coined each day, new epithets created for collaborationists and for apathetic colonists who hoped only for the war to end. There was a wealth of good talk about the striving new poets and writers of France, and the valiant men who refused to work under the Germans, or who dropped their pens and turned farmer or who escaped at the risk of their lives to join the armies of the allies. Some of them talked too loud and too much and were sent off into *residence surveillée* in the South. Some were warned to be more discreet, and others just worked on stubbornly, silently, waiting the day when the Axis would be crushed. These brilliant, comprehending, unknown Frenchmen, who were the promising journalists under the republic, are among those who will save France, I am certain. And when their irrepressible wit finally is released from bondage, they will have a dazzling revenge.

Those wretched Nazi Frenchmen, disciples of Laval and Abetz, those heavy-headed collaborationists, who exercised so much influence and power, the kind who "would fire on Americans," and who did, will be in certain jeopardy.

I liked the managing editor of one newspaper in Algiers

who worked for a collaborationist publisher. Over his desk he had plastered an enormous enlargement of a photograph showing French soldiers of the Legion against Bolshevism—French soldiers wearing German uniforms! This fellow purposely displayed the picture to visitors to show to what depths some Frenchmen had fallen under the tutelage of Vichy.

Another sub-editor one day was talking over the telephone with the censorship office when I entered his bureau. He was furious about something and didn't mind saying so. I heard him scream, "Let me tell you, if you don't know it, that your job as censor presupposes that you have at least the minimum amount of intelligence, do you hear, the minimum."

Chapter Ten

The Plot Thickens

WHEN the mighty German war machine turned its fury on Yugoslavia and Greece, submitting Belgrade and Athens to the usual cultural visits of the Luftwaffe, I received a cable from my employers in New York, the International News Service. The cable explained that since the center of gravity of the news had shifted to the Balkans, my services were no longer required in North Africa.

I showed my message to Consul General Felix Cole, as he had a warm sense of humor. "Fired," he murmured accusingly, as he read the wire, "just like Mister Hearst!" A Consul General in a far-off post is always gravely concerned when an American wayfarer in his bailiwick suddenly finds himself without visible means of support. However, I was not worried.

As a newspaper correspondent, I was all alone in Algiers and would soon be without a competitor in all of French North Africa. Later I sent a slightly persuasive, slightly offensive cablegram to the I.N.S. which eventually wedged some severance pay out of them. That morning I went to

a cheerful little bistro near the Consulate and had a drink of pink wine, *vin rosé*, which most of the wine drinkers take in North Africa. It is so plentiful there that even the Germans had not yet forced the French to ration it, up to the time I left.

I bought the morning newspapers and went up the street to the Parc de Galland, that hillside haven of roses and palms and gauzy pepper trees, where walls and pergolas hung sheer with wistaria and cascades of pink geraniums. It was blissfully quiet and the sunny morning was fragrant with flowers, but the news from Vichy and from Berlin was ominous. After Crete, Africa's turn would be next, the newspapers said. The newspapers meant to imply that Egypt and Suez would be next. To me it meant possibly that North Africa, all of it, might be the next victim of Nazi strategy. But the editors in New York did not think North Africa was yet important.

The United Press correspondent Ravotto had already been recalled to Madrid. Bill McGaffin, of the Associated Press, had gone to Tunisia and was preparing a roundabout journey through Algeria, Morocco and Tangiers which eventually would land him in India. And now, even the usually news-conscious I.N.S. had decided that French North Africa should not be covered. Most American newspapers and the majority of the news agencies were satisfied to have the region covered by their representatives in Vichy, than which nothing could be more inaccurate and nothing more pro-German.

All around me I could see signs of approaching conflict. I knew two things which were hard to explain to American editors. The British Eighth Army, then under Wavell, was going to win or lose in the so-called Western Desert fighting, and if it should win, the British would thrust against toward Tripoli and Tunisia. I knew also that, sooner or later, Americans would land in North Africa. I knew this, although we were not then even in the war.

It is often in the quiet places that the stage is being set for battle. The preceding autumn, Greece had been quiet, and it was ignored by the editors. Then the Italians attacked. Immediately the newspapers, the agencies and radio editors found plenty of work for correspondents already working or marooned in Athens. There was a slight lull in Balkan news after the Greeks had flung back Mussolini's invincible armies into Albania. Then the Balkans broke into print again when the Wermacht Juggernaut rolled into Yugoslavia, desecrated Thermopylae and took Athens, brushing aside the British Allies. That stage of the campaign ended officially in Crete, although neither the Greeks nor the Yugoslavs ever stopped fighting the Axis.

Certainly, this two thousand miles of North African coastline from Tripolitania to Rio d'Oro, would not be neglected much longer. It was a ready-made springboard for operations against occupied Europe and there could be no doubt it would be invested by one of the belligerents, whichever one could reach the spot first. Consequently, there was a conspiracy of silence about French North Africa. And it was

just as well that Hitler needed the oil and resources of Russia and tried to get them before striking at Africa. We needed time, one of the most precious commodities in war.

Meanwhile, I felt that none of the warring nations, neither Britain and its Allies nor the Axis and their satellites, were tactically blind to the situation in Algiers, which indeed was a focal point of interest. So it gave me a great deal of pleasure to realize that my own country was acting with considerable intelligence and tact, concerning the possibilities in North Africa. General Weygand was efficiently organizing the defenses of the colonies and he was also on excellent terms with the Americans. Official Washington was steadily increasing government personnel in our consulates, and was preparing even to open a new consulate in Oran. Vichy was prating away about the security of the empire as if it really believed it. According to the newspapers, North Africa was beautifully safe from invasion, isolated from the rigors of war and blessed with peace and tranquillity!

All this looked too good to be true. So I contrived to inform my friends in the London bureau of the United Press as to the real situation. In a day or so I had two cablegrams, one from the U.P. in New York and one from the London office ordering me to work in Algiers.

Once more I had visible means of support as a newspaperman, so I dropped into the Aletti for the noonday aperitif. I wanted to snoop about among the spies in white flannels and the lieutenant colonels, the majors and captains

plastered with service ribbons, and the new arrivals from Vichy who were always horrified to see so much gay and heedless eating and drinking and to hear so much loose talk. The Cintra bar was jammed as usual.

As I entered the Aletti that day through the big portico, I noticed something new, something that was indeed a sign of the times. To the left of the doorway was a big table, and about this table was a group of eight or ten men. There could be no mistaking their identity. The regular detectives, consisting of local and visiting plain-clothes men, hangers-on, paid informers, and just ordinary flat feet, were all there—working in a combination. They all had so many people to watch and report on, so many comings and goings to check, that they worked out their problem in the same way that a bunch of New York reporters cover a big fire, or as the ship news reporters down at the Battery cover the 24-hour arrivals of incoming ships. They had set up an organization and were working together and for each other; that is, I presume they were working together. And as time went on I got to know them. When warmer weather came they would move out to the cooler portico, or when thirst overtook them in their arduous duties, they would adjourn to the big café terrace to the right of the hotel, whence they could see everyone entering or leaving and could check them nicely.

The “Welcome Committee,” as we called them, became an established feature of life in Algiers. Our relations were marked, of course, with deep mutual admiration and re-

spect. Early or late there was at least one on duty, and on one or more occasions, when I got in before they had arrived, I felt prompted to leave my card on the table.

But with the installation of the Welcome Committee, I noted certain well-defined changes were occurring in Algiers. There were fewer strangers, and at the same time the regular crowd assumed a more recognizable identity. All but one or two of the American business representatives had gone. The rest of the regular clientele began to fall into groups.

There were the local men about town, the Vichy appointees, Germans, Italians, representatives of the French army, navy and air force, a small consulate crowd of whom some half dozen were Americans, some local gamblers and ne'er-do-wells, a French refugee group, a distinct anti-Vichy group, and most suspect of all, a coterie of anti-collaborationists who were eternally planning to slip off to Gibraltar to join the Fighting French or the British. Quite apart from all this strangely assorted crowd was the Weygand contingent. Even an unpractised eye could pick them out. They did not seem to belong to the *dramatis personae* of this daily comedy or tragedy, whichever it was. And sure enough, they too were later superseded by the orthodox "patriots" from Vichy.

It was about this time that I met the Judge. He was sitting with a group of American Vice Consuls in the Cintra Bar.

I had met him first in Monte Carlo, years before. He was

much younger then and his temples were not gray as they were now. He had a slight identifying squint as if he needed glasses. In the Casino at Monte Carlo I had asked someone who he was and was told he was called the Judge ever since he had got tight one night and started quoting to a croupier from what he called The Law of Averages. Later I was introduced to him in the Café de Paris and we talked European politics, German re-armament and the League of Nations, and I found that the Judge was especially well informed and that he certainly was no judge, although an eminent authority on "bar practices" in many lands.

The Judge was attracted to the 1930 Naval Disarmament Conference in London where we renewed our acquaintance. I turned over to him what gossip a newspaperman hears. Just before France collapsed in this world war, I ran into him in the American Embassy in Paris. We shook hands. He pressed a package of American cigarettes on me, and he was off again. And here was the Judge in Algiers, apparently in excellent form. He told me quite frankly that he was working for the government. He said he was staying on some time, and invited me to lunch the next day. I went home that night in good spirits, for something told me that that strange organization known as the "government" was keenly on the job here in North Africa, and that this quick-witted, soft-voiced, squint-eyed gentleman who knew the Law of Averages, was going to be a big help in Africa.

The Judge, I suspect, will reappear often enough in this book. Perhaps one has already guessed what he was doing,

but that doesn't matter. It is important to know that what he did was of great service to his country, and I hope he is still carrying on. There are all kinds of soldiers in a war. Some of them do their best work before the war is started. Anyway, the Germans in the Cintra certainly understood, because they used to gaze on the Judge with dewy eyes and wistful glances. "Ah, the Germans," The Judge would say, lifting his cocktail almost as if to toast them while they looked at him, "they know everything and nothing. Let's have another drink."

When our little party broke up, the Judge enquired about the press. He found I was U.P. correspondent, alone in Algiers, and professed surprise. "Stick around if you can," he said, "you may have a *big* story."

In fact, I had decided to stay right where I was, for it had been reported from Governor General Abrial's office that no more newspapermen would be granted visas for North Africa. This naturally was an order from Vichy. I learned that the authorities were angry at Bill McGaffin for stories he sent out of Tunisia and also for not showing the proper respect for the solemn tenets of Vichy. Both of us had cabled stories of thousands of Italian bodies washed ashore and buried on the coast of Tunisia from ships sunk by the British. How these stories got past both the local and the Vichy censorships none could tell. But the Italian Commission was furious.

My story on the Italian bodies washed ashore in Tunisia was particularly alarming, not to say sensational. I reported

three thousand Italian dead over a certain period of sinkings, but in transmission an extra zero was added so that the American newspapers played up thirty thousand Italian dead. Had I reported so many German dead, I would have been expelled the next day.

The Italian Commission did not protest, although they gave me some rather dark and glowering looks as I passed their tables in the Aletti. Many of the dead bodies were robbed of clothing by the Tunisian Arabs who found them, inasmuch as the Arabs needed wearing apparel and no cloth was available. According to report, there were some high ranking officers moving about in the Tunisian olive groves, if uniforms alone denoted rank.

In view of these developments, the United Press appointed me correspondent for all French North Africa, and my credentials seemed to satisfy the police. I had also received a letter from Bill McGaffin saying he was fed up with the censorship and was going to Tangiers, but would stop off to see me en route. From that early summer of 1941, I worked in North Africa without a competitor or an opposition agency until well into 1942. I estimated later that at least three out of every four stories I sent were relegated to the wastebasket. I filed regularly to the U.P. office in Vichy and of those stories of mine which reached that miserable "capital," I heard about three out of five got through the Vichy censorship to New York. As a solitary correspondent in North Africa, I put out quite a news service, for my own pleasure as much as anything else, and for

the delectation of the censors. I am sure I pleased them, no matter how many of my reports they were forced to delete, or hold, as they often said, "for further study." Later on I could not speak of my work with such levity.

And so, with my new job I made the best of those wonderful days of summer. I had replenished my "wardrobe," and I found comfortable quarters in the Djemila Palace, near the Consulate and near my favorite little bistro and the Parc de Galland. My hotel was Moorish in decoration and architecture and my valet de chambre, Saadi, was engagingly loquacious and as unconcerned about important things as an Arab could possibly be.

When I went there I asked Saadi to drive a nail in a coat-rack for me. When I left the hotel about a year later, he had still not driven the nail. You see, to drive a nail, it requires a hammer, and having the nail and the hammer, it requires a little time, two or three minutes. Well, Saadi never could manage to get all those three things together. Moreover, being a follower of the Prophet, we had different calendars. I read the Koran in my spare time and that pleased Saadi, and, indeed, we agreed on the utter timelessness of many things. But I would have liked that nail. Saadi confided in me one fond hope. He wanted the war to end in an Allied victory so he could go back to Nice, back to the little hotel he had worked in there.

Summer in Algeria was a season of delightful sea bathing. That took care of the daytime, but the nights were dreadfully dull. The cafés closed early, the theater was almost

killed by the war, and the cinema was mediocre, with occasionally a good pre-war French or American film. General Weygand tried to brighten up the town, so he permitted the Aletti to open what was called the Cabaret de Paris, in a basement music hall of the hotel. It was natural that this would not last long, since the German psychological war plan was to stifle everything, to make life as dreary as possible for Frenchmen, to deprive them of pleasure and slowly to stultify their minds.

Vichy accepted this as a righteous manifestation of deep patriotism and a sign of self-abnegation toward the Marshal. There should be parades of French robots, wearing the Legion Insignia and giving the Fascist salute to the Tricolor. There should be subservient little minds, working in little ruts, doing little things. Initiative, originality, and independence were contrary to the dictum of Berlin.

The Cabaret de Paris was a fantastic success. It came as a release from all this drab, disciplined dullness, so that the hall and the adjacent bar were crowded every night with most of the wealth and the beauty and much of the wit of Algiers.

Jean de Lettre, a talented young music hall star, pianist, composer and raconteur, was producer. He had an excellent cast of artists all from Paris. The people were virtually starving for some Gallic humor. Champagne flowed at prices deftly calculated by the Aletti brothers to a nicely adjusted maximum; in other words, all that the traffic would bear. The spirit of the Parisian theater, its music halls and the

Café Concerts, bubbled and glittered and fused in a nightly entertainment, while de Lettre held forth at the piano.

But the cabaret was too brilliant to last. People were actually happy—the authorities grew correspondingly gloomy. Moreover, de Lettre was singing too many English and American songs and playing altogether too much American swing. He had been at Hollywood. He was even the composer of a song, popular in America, called “Hands Across the Table.” The spirited de Lettre had fond recollections of our country.

The beginning of the end came one night when Bill McGaffin, as he had written me, had stopped over en route to Tangiers. We had a table near the piano and de Lettre spotted us. Every night a bottle of champagne had been given the table or party which guessed the titles of ten popular and classic compositions. It had been fun. This night de Lettre played some obscure swing pieces along with some equally obscure classics. McGaffin had once played in his university band and certainly knew the popular hits. Between us we guessed them all and won the bottle of champagne. De Lettre was delighted that his American friends, as he announced to the crowd, had won the champagne. He had hardly uttered the phrase, “my American friends,” when there was a commotion at the tables. One tall individual in civilian clothes arose and cried in a loud voice, “Et la Normandie!” He then stalked out followed by the man who was with him.

The excitement soon died down, but in a few minutes

de Lettre was called backstage by one of the Aletti brothers. When he returned, we learned that the man who provoked the incident was a naval commander who had just arrived from Vichy. He was supposed to be one of that navy personnel representing Admiral Darlan, sent out to report on the attitude of Frenchmen outside Vichy. The United States government had just seized the Normandie in New York for many good and obvious reasons. It seems that the French Admiralty, as well as the Germans, were somewhat aggrieved. Naturally, they said the American government was stealing the big liner.

It was known that de Lettre had been soundly lectured by the irate Vichyite and told not to refer to Americans as friends. The story got around town. It ran through to the Prefectures, to the Armistice Commissions and to Vichy and to the bars and cafés and probably even to the Kasbah. It was of no real importance, but the incident classified de Lettre as “de Gaullist”—one of those stupid things that were always happening. The Cabaret de Paris was soon closed on a Prefectoral order as charged with being a center of “de Gaullist activity.”

In fact, when he first produced the show, de Lettre had asked permission of the authorities and the censorship if he might present some songs in English, inasmuch as the people were clamoring for popular music. The permission was granted on condition that his artists sing, “American,” and not English words.

The smallest incident, such as what happened in the

Cabaret de Paris, could in those days serve as a dividing line between two groups of Frenchmen—Vichyites and de Gaullists. Many a citizen who had been indifferent or prudent in the past would, for some absurd reason, go over to one side or the other, and trouble would then set in for him.

As an American I found more and more friends who sought to take me into their confidence and quietly prod me for news about getting to Gibraltar, or ask if the United States Consulate could not help them enlist in the Allied army. Once a group of three aviators entreated me to get them smuggled out by the Consulate to join the American air force "before it came over." This was about six months before Pearl Harbor.

A well-known official from Paris who had been an officer in the war told me he was disgusted with the whole business and was making plans for the maintenance of his family after he had left. "I have my uniform in the closet," he said, "all ready! I shall not escape by stealth. I know some day that I shall join a French army here. We shall fight the Germans again. I feel sure you Americans will be with us." This officer told me there had already been some small, secret meetings in Algiers and that their information was to the effect that a trained army of between 250,000 and 300,000 was available in North Africa, and that in a short time it could be raised to perhaps a half million. Of course, he warned me, the material would have to be forthcoming from America. "We have nothing but old rifles and a few

motorized field guns," he explained, "in other words, junk which the Germans have left us to keep down any native uprising."

Later on the surveillance became so constant that I could no longer see this Frenchman. We had a last luncheon in a quiet restaurant where he told me he was being closely watched. Like many others, he was being spied on, but not molested. That came later.

It was on the beaches that one enjoyed the fullest measure of freedom in Algiers. There in the blazing light, browned by the African sun, a half nude de Gaullist or a half nude Vichyite seemed quite beyond any political reckoning. Before rationing arrived, one could get a good lunch or dinner at most of the beaches. It was agreeable to dine under a big, colored umbrella on the white sands fringing the azure sea. One could enjoy a long, lazy day, with the all-enveloping warmth renewing the life cells. And as a further felicity, the ceaseless music of the surf would drown out and reduce to a choral monotone the conversations which ordinarily would arouse suspicion in the restaurants of the city.

At one little beach near the westernmost point of the Bay of Algiers, inside the Pointe Pescade, there was daily material for political fireworks but the fuse was never lighted. In fact, there were two beaches there. One was called Franco's, which in this case was only a name and had nothing to do with the Spanish dictator. The other one was called Le Week-End. This beach was popular and very pro-

British, because the proprietor had gone to school in London and Siki, the black boatman, could tell the time in English.

But the Franco beach was more chic. There the German Commission occupied a set of tables and umbrellas. (Some of these "gentlemen" were captured later by the Americans and transported to West Virginia.) They took sun baths, read picture papers and conversed generally in German. Somewhat distant from them was the Italian Commission, garbed in silken swimming apparel. They usually were well groomed, wore gold wrist chains and were ever alert to a flirtation with the nearest naiad, of which there were many.

Farther on would be the American consular group, talking French or English. These three potential enemies, the Germans, Italians and Americans, rarely noticed each other. Even the Axis did not mix. If one bumped into another by accident on the strand, they made their excuses courteously and went on. The Germans were anything but "supermen." I noticed they were soft and white and in pudgy physical shape. The Italians were slimmer and more athletic. The Americans seemed the most robust and muscular, except for the Algerians who were in excellent form with their years of sports, swimming, yachting and easy prosperity here under the African sun.

At Franco's there was always a gallery of Arab spectators leaning on the rail which ran along the edge of the bluff over the beach. They never ceased to wonder at these almost nude Europeans, braving a sun without headgear that they, as born Africans and Moslems, would never dare expose

themselves to. For his prayerful meditations the Arab will bathe his feet many times a day, but to roll like a porpoise in the sea, and in such immodest near nudity, would certainly have shocked Mohammed. To the fez-wearing gallery above Franco's Beach, the Germans, the Italians, the Americans and all of them were merely inexplicable infidels, risking their bodies in the sea and their minds in the sun.

When The Judge had invited me to lunch in the Cintra he had said something about taking a swim, so I had in mind this popular beach at the Pointe Pescade. But I was in for a surprise. After I met him the next morning, we drove much farther westward, to a little spot that the Judge and his friends, other Americans, seemed to know rather well. We had a fine repast, for it was the Fourth of July, and as such it was quite fitting on that glistening shore. The beach was practically isolated, since few could reach it in a motor car with fuel so scarce.

In our swimming togs we waded out incredibly far over a smooth, sandy bottom that slanted very gradually into the Mediterranean. The place was a combination of sand dunes, pine groves and sea. Except on Sundays there was never anyone there. The restaurant fare was perfect, the service was more than courteous, the very modern little hotel seemed to belong to us. A charming spot which the Judge and his close friends seemed to know very well, but always in a sort of detached way. It meant nothing to them beyond being a quiet hideout where one might have a good dinner,

a frolic in the surf, some dice shaking for drinks, and a pleasant ride back to Algiers.

It meant nothing at all, this little out-of-the-way place . . . only this: Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark and his American officer group landed there in October 1942 for their historic secret meeting with an underground committee of French officers headed by a general; and three weeks later one of the American columns landed there in assault barges and marched into Algiers.

Chapter Eleven

The Arabs

COMING back to Algiers after our Fourth of July lunch, we passed one of those strange native slum heaps known in French as a "bidonville." It consists of a wretched collection of hovels piled helter-skelter under the brow of a hill. It was late at night and from one of the miserable shacks I could hear the faint rise and fall of a melancholy Arab chant. Away from the modern city one gets accustomed to this plaintive Arab music, sometimes accompanied by the regular, dim beating of a tom-tom, which is part of the many ritualistic practices varying with Arab countries and tribes. Sometimes it will be a group of men squatted around a piper, while a drummer in a corner of the room arouses their spirits to a religious frenzy, in that weird, relentless cadence caused by the accented slapping of the drum. Or perhaps someone is ill and they are trying to beat away an evil spirit from their midst, for in these wretched bidonvilles, they cannot afford to pay even the slight fee of the *toubib*, the Arab doctor.

The bidonvilles get their names from the French word *bidon*, the tin in which gasoline is sold. Cast-off *bidons* are

flattened out and the tins are used to patch the sides or form the rickety roofs of these lowly dwellings. They are constructed of old doors, fruit crates, pieces of rope, slabs of glass, matting, palm leaves and any piece of junk with a lateral surface. The people crowd in them like rabbits and in unsanitary conditions which can only breed disease and pestilence.

The French administration is slowly getting rid of these typhus-breeding slums, but there is still a disgraceful number of them about Algiers. One of the first things that General Weygand did was to plan clean cheap workmen's houses for the Arabs, intending eventually to wipe out the bidonvilles. They offer tragic evidence as to just how underprivileged, or rather how deplorable is the condition of many Arabs.

No matter where one goes in Algiers, or elsewhere in North Africa, one sees the Arabs, of white or olive brown skin, dressed in every grade of robe, coat or *burnous*, according to their station in life. Some are in fantastic rags; some are in rich silks and hand-woven, richly embroidered cloths. When they are very poor, of the bidonville sort, they go barefooted, even in winter. Most of them wear the red fez, while others prefer a thin excuse for a turban, but all, rich or poor, semi-nude or swaddled in flowing silks, will wear something on their heads. That is Mohammedan.

Although the Arabs have their own way of doing things (they seem often to be going about in a daze), they are very industrious, up early and late, shuffling along in sandals

or slippers, pushing their carts, driving their loaded donkeys, or astride them with their feet almost touching the ground. The tribesmen of the desert have fine steeds, and some of the more prosperous farmers have automobiles. In Morocco and Tunisia many wealthy natives ride about in splendid American cars in normal times.

The Arab has a patience which surpasses understanding. One sees the vicissitudes of history, of glory and decline in their grave features. Heat, cold, rain or drought do not seem to disturb them. They will wait interminably for a bus, huddled together in their robes, most of them carrying a long stick which they use for a sort of cane.

They are good farmers, although primitive in their methods. They are rare artisans: weavers of cloths and carpets, carvers of marble for buildings and of silver for jewelry. In Morocco and Tunisia the natives tend to be more prosperous, and consequently more honest. In Algeria, however, the political evils of the France which fell are reflected in their sometimes furtive ways of living and in the irregular economic conditions. The administrative neglect of the native question here is apparent. But rich or poor, the fez-wearing Arab is to be seen everywhere throughout North Africa, sitting in quiet meditation, or sleeping on the ground in the sun, or going calmly about his daily task. He predominates over the European ten to one.

Although we of the western world have a way of referring to the native populations of North Africa and the Near East as Arabs, as a general designation it would be more accurate,

perhaps, to call them Moslems. These uncounted millions are made up of many races and tribes, but they are united by one indissoluble bond, the faith of Islam. Basically it is one of the purest of religions, although the youngest, since it was born in the seventh century.

However, it will perhaps be more convenient to continue using the name Arabs for these gifted people, nearly all of whom wear flowing robes instead of tight clothing and regard modesty as one of the greatest of virtues. Few people have been so little understood, so much maligned, or so oversentimentalized.

I am sure that they are going to furnish one of the most disturbing problems in the postwar set-up. In plain words, we shall hear from the Arabs. They can no longer be one of the elements to be dealt with as so much "native population," apportioned off with territories along with the trees and natural phenomena.

The Arab question, Pan-Arabism or Pan-Islamism, if you will, will have to be answered, and it should be. We as a people, a member of the United Nations, cannot hope to promulgate among other people the principles of the Atlantic Charter, and fail in our own ethical obligations toward them even if they are, in a measure, self-imposed, so to speak. In fact, this makes it all the more incumbent on us to fulfill them. I do not mean that after this war the Arabs will revolt or engage in political blackmail, as so many minorities have done, but I feel they are too important as a group, too widespread as to population, too intelligent and

too religious as human beings, to be any longer ignored. And their friendship alone is of inestimable value.

Islam is not too far from Christianity. Mohammed venerated Jesus Christ as a prophet, but not as the son of God. The God of the Moslems is Allah—their one and only God, and as we know, Mohammed is simply his prophet. I believe that the religious unity of the Islamic peoples represents a spiritual force which it should be wise for us to investigate and prudent for us to understand. We are engaged in a devastating, brutal war, which is a clash between our concepts of freedom and the materialist forces of greed, masked and disguised as political ideologies. The Axis nations are out to conquer and enslave, and to do that they have challenged and attacked our fundamental spiritual heritage: human liberty.

This scourge of heaven, the Axis, like that of Genghis Khan, like that of Attila, is one of those definitive tests of the kind of civilization preferred by the majority. How then can we ignore a section of the human race, so virile yet so thoughtful, so passively remote from modern world conquest as Islam, the very name of which means Peace?

Already I hear a chorus of protests from the more educated Tories of this world and from certain spokesmen of the entrenched religions. They can indeed point to the sins of Islam, even to its heyday of conquest. And were I a Moslem, I, too, could point to the sins of Christianity, and to its day of conquest. All this is so much casuistry.

There is beauty and hope for the faithful in the teachings

of Mohammed just as there is loftiness and mercy in the revelations of St. Francis. There is divine inspiration in the translucent calmness of the mosque as there is fervent hope and spiritual elevation in the Christian temple. Who could walk with St. Francis at Assisi among the frescoes of Giotto in that dim lower church and come suddenly out into the crystalline light of the wide Umbrian plain and not be lifted and ennobled in spirit? The Protestant who would deny this is as bigoted as the Catholic who would deny his fellow Christian spiritual grace.

We can put aside the corruptions of the Caliphates, the degradation of Islam by three centuries of Barbary pirates, just as we can set aside the rapacious brutality of the Crusaders or of the Inquisition. Meanwhile we can go on worshipping a merciful Christ, in fullest liberty to think and reason things out through all the range of human knowledge from Aristotle to Father Divine. And we can hope that the Moslems will also be socially and economically free to revive and reorganize under the wise precepts of Mohammed. It might be well to realize that the people who invented algebra are not stupid.

We as Americans are making our first mass contacts with the Arabs in the war through Africa, and it is certain that the American who comes home will have some definite ideas about the rights of free and foreign friendly peoples.

I first saw the Moslem horde en masse when I arrived in Tripoli in 1926, at the time of Mussolini's first visit to his "Roman Empire." Thousands of them in their white

burnouses and *barakans* had been drawn into Tripoli for the occasion. I saw them passively submit to their chiefs who whipped at their robes to push them back onto the sidewalks before Il Duce passed by on his white steed. That night I heard the uncanny chanting and the staggered beat of the tom-tom for the first time, and I ruminated on the fact of being a "Christian dog," an infidel.

In the bazaars next day, I talked with some Arabs and found them very friendly, just as they are farther west. I hired a guide and he explained many little things, and if I was an infidel in their eyes, they never showed it. When the voice of the Muezzin called from the minaret my fez-wearing guide knelt in prayer as I moved farther on and kept still. It was all very simple.

The present-day Moslems have not forgotten their period of glory and they are as proud of their history as any democratic people. Their great empire was at its zenith in the Middle Ages, and its period of swift decline set in shortly before the discovery of America.

As allies of France and even as an army in transit through their territories, we are bound to deal diplomatically with the Arab question. While openly advocating Democracy in its widest sense, we cannot espouse at this time adoption of political panaceas which are likely to plunge virtually peaceful regions into rebellion and economic disorder.

The Arab problem, as I have already indicated, is something to work out in peacetime along practical and human lines. The sudden relinquishing of the authority of France

over these territories could do much harm. It might plunge millions of North Africans pell-mell into something comparable, perhaps, to another Ottoman Caliphate. But there is a line of conduct and a distinction with respect to their race and their historic past which we as friendly foreigners can establish and study.

When I had arrived in Algiers in early 1941, I could see without being told that the situation of the average Arab (especially the city dweller) was being further complicated by the war. They were not only scantily clothed but underfed. They were being fawned on and bribed by Germans and treated with the conqueror's contempt by Italians, while, according to some Algerian colonists, the Frenchmen were "spoiling them" with too much kindness.

The Arab does not want or need sympathy. He wants and needs good government and justice from an authority that he can respect, and mayhap admire. Centuries of contemplation in the miraculous East has given the Moslem native dignity of bearing. Add to this a religion of pure meditation minus the heavy impedimenta of an ecclesiastical hierarchy, and you have a human being happily bereft of many of life's handicaps, and unfettered by most of these dubious gadgets which many of us in America regard as "civilization."

Ethically, the Arab is on the same level with his Christian brothers. Interpretations of both the Bible and the Koran differ. The traditions of each probably look absurd to the other. I have known Arabs scrupulously honest and others

wholly untrustworthy. That seems to go for most races, although ethnologists insist that only primitive peoples are inherently trustworthy.

The Arab marriage and divorce customs appear somewhat wild to our monogamous minds. And among the lower classes there are amusing stories frequently of domestic infelicity. A friend of mine who had a farm at Biskra had an Arab tenant farmer who divorced his wife because she did not know how to steal. The poor wife had stolen a palm log and was caught. The Arab husband took the wife to his tent, lectured her severely, bit her on the arm, and then divorced her, sending her back to her father. He found a better wife, and was happy, for the new spouse was expert at stealing dates.

There are Koranical and other laws which concern property and inheritances and the rights of valid wives. I have seen Arab youths wooing their veiled sweethearts on park benches in the same adoring manner as the youth in America. Weddings are occasions for colorful ceremonies and wild hilarity. The Arab funeral, in which the defunct is carried in an open coffin through the streets, is a solemn affair. Mohammed forbade Moslems to drink, so they are generally an abstemious race, drinking much black coffee, well sugared, and quantities of green or mint tea.

The essentially poetic streak in the Arab makes him love flowers. I have seen even the most forlorn old wrecks, shuffling about in filth and rags, with faces that only the

Barbary coast could produce, but tucked under a dirty fez would be a freshly opened rose, or in a sinewy hand a fragrant sprig of mimosa. These are surface observations against the background of an intensely interesting population.

Racially the people of North Africa are Berbers, intermixed with Semitic Arabs and African negroids. By religion they are, almost to a man, Moslems. Their daily languages or the mother tongue they speak varies considerably, being for the most part a polyglot of Berber dialects and Arabic vocabulary. All of them, however, share a common liturgical language, understood by the overwhelming majority, literate and illiterate alike. This language is the literary Arabic tongue. So the peoples of North Africa can be grouped among the Arabic-speaking peoples, and they share with the latter their vague Pan-Arab aspirations.

The religion which they have in common, as well as their common language, constitutes the key to their life and culture, their hopes and aspirations, their fears and apprehensions.

Most Arabs have a passive interest in the Nationalist movement. The intellectuals among them, however, are more intensely nationalistic. Talk to them from Persia to Morocco and they will tell you that the greater part of the Arabic-speaking world has been long under foreign domination and therefore shares the same antipathy to all

foreigners, particularly non-Moslem foreigners. Their national aspirations are Moslem Arab aspirations, and their prejudices are, likewise, the same.

In common with the Arabic-speaking peoples and the majority of the so-called subject peoples, they have a tendency to depend on a foreigner to save them from another foreigner. For this reason they are hostile to "the foreign unbeliever" who governs them, and friendly to his equally foreign and unbelieving enemies.

In the regions now under Spanish and French and, until recently, Italian domination, the people are anti-Spanish, anti-French, and above everything else, anti-Italian. They have many grievances against all three.

The intellectual Arab will tell you that Spanish excesses in Morocco, French corruption in Algeria, and Italian brutality in Libya are common knowledge throughout the Arabic-speaking world, and that all await the day of deliverance and redress. They say that the history of these lands during the last forty years bears testimony to the fact that the native inhabitants' submission to their rulers has been wrought in blood, and that they look with messianic hope for deliverance. As Moslems, they await the "mahdi," the one sent to deliver them.

From 1919 to 1926, this messianic hope was aroused by the exploits of the notorious Muhammad ibn'Abd-al-Karim, better known to the world as Abd-el-Krim, leader of the Riff uprising. Up until the very day that this doughty

warrior surrendered to the French, he had fondly expected British aid, but no such aid materialized.

The defeat of Abd-el-Krim brought a lull to the nationalist movement. During the Spanish civil war there was talk of freeing Abd-el-Krim in order to check the partisans of General Franco, but the Blum Government (then in power in France) waited too long and the erstwhile leader of the Riffs remained in his French colonial exile on Reunion Island, off Madagascar.

The early victories of Britain in Libya in this present war cheered the natives of North Africa. Al-Sanusi, religious leader of the Moslems in Libya, threw his support on the side of Britain. And here again the Arab nationalist will explain that the British habit of thinking in terms of empire has even now prevented them from granting Al-Sanusi their wholehearted support. The Arabs say that beyond laudatory words by the British and a few banquets, nothing has been done to organize the tribes.

After the occupation of Madagascar and Reunion by the British, many Arabs still hoped that the United Nations would seize the opportunity of freeing Abd-el-Krim to organize the North Africa tribes and wean them away from both Vichy and Spain, but obviously nothing was done. It must be remembered that the present "head" of the French state, Marshal Petain, was the French general who defeated Abd-el-Krim, and the latter would probably have welcomed the opportunity of a settlement. But again, what they call, "the mentality of empire" prevailed. The Pan-Islamic Arabs

say it is this same mentality that is costing the United Nations the wholehearted support of India.

From conversations I have had with Arabs, from my valet-de-chambre Saadi to editors and teachers in Arabic, I feel sure the Arabs offer poor ground for political experimentation. In fact, Saadi was a great conservative, whereas an Arabic editor, a friend of mine, was an incorrigible bourgeois, interested above everything else in civil service reform for Arab government employees. One little lad, Ali, to whom I gave a franc whenever I saw him and who followed me about in the role of what he called "protector," was quite content to be a ubiquitous beggar. He always wore a white shirt and a clean fez and told me he was going to inherit his father's pushcart business, which probably consisted of one creaking barrow. I feel sure that generally the people of North Africa care little for, and understand nothing of such ideologies as National-Socialism, Communism, Capitalism, Democracy, etc. By tribal temperament and religion they insist they are democratic, despite the fact that they have not yet developed the paraphernalia of democratic government.

In the field of propagandizing these millions of North African Moslems, radio propaganda seems of dubious value. The natives are already propaganda conscious to the radio. Here the intellectuals think the most effective propaganda is the written word, although the bulk of the people are illiterate.

I have been told that a written document read by one

“shaykh” and through him passed on by word of mouth is better than fifty broadcasts. Islam is a religion of a book, and its followers have a special weakness for books. A printed document cannot err; a radio voice might.

Still more effective than either the radio or the shaykh, is the silent work of the Moslem agent who can argue with learned shaykhs in mosque or school, bazaar or market place, who would buy chieftains and sway followers. (The Germans tried this system with varying success.) The task of such an agent is, indeed, easy, considering the amount of discontent with the new order still prevailing in those lands.

There is one such potential agent now an exile in French Equatorial Africa, at present under free French rule. He is Muhammad Ibn-'Allal al-Fasi, member of a good Moslem family, leader of the youth movement in Fez and one of the most influential Arabs in Morocco and Algeria. The Germans would have spent millions to effect his liberation and win his confidence. The mere freeing of this exile might be more eloquent than any possible propaganda, but again we meet the delicate question of inflamed nationalism. It is doubtful if the Arab problem in North Africa will be settled by such heroic measures as turning the youth movement loose in Fez. Both Abd-el-Krim and al-Fasi are Berbers and doubtless appeal deeply to the imagination of the natives. For the Berbers of North Africa are at present a polyglot of racial and linguistic groups welded together by the centripetal force of Islam. They nevertheless have

given many scholastic theologians to Islam. But tribal jealousies have weakened their power, and there is in them also a strong streak of resentment to central authority. Islam is slowly uniting them in the Arabic language but the process is slow.

As matters stand now, the North Africans of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia have the promise of better days from the French. General Weygand has been actively engaged in bettering the conditions of the Arabic-speaking native, and he had done all he could under the Vichy-German domination. The administrative reforms he tried to introduce should be the stepping stone to gradual improvement. Whether the French would listen to autonomy or independence is another question. Of all the great powers generally suspected of imperialism, the United States today stands in the most favored position with the Arabs.

Arab leaders, mainly in the cultural centers of Fez and Cairo, have followed our every move with the Filipinos and with extraordinary intelligence. They know that it is on our record as a nation that we moved sincerely to give the Philippines its independence and that we would have kept our word. That is the best of all propaganda for these Arab friends.

Organization of the North African Arab into a working, political unity is far from a simple task. Even Lawrence of Arabia was a long, long way from wielding any real power in an aroused Islam. There is also a geographical obstacle in the Sahara, a vast, mysterious land in itself with

its nomad tribes, its romantic caravans, its smugglers, its noblemen and its knaves. And even within the Sahara is the majestic Hoggar desert, the strangest land of all, a spectral world in deep purple, bordered by gold and ochre mountains, where tall, blue-clad, veiled men ride camels and carry long dark spears. The women of the Hoggar rule over a Taureg matriarchy. They live in great tents with their bobbing herds, while the men of the Taureg tribes are charged with safeguarding the stern ritual of age-old traditions, violated only at the risk of one's life.

Islam has many tribes and customs. Its political unity is a struggle with the fierce independent spirit of man with his inherent propensity to wander in search of better pastures. And it is an uneven struggle against nature itself. Islamic North Africa is a region of climatic extremes, of blazing daylight, of freezing dawns, of shifting dunes over waterless desert. Southward the people merge into jungle life and darker tribes. Northward the people come through mountains into miles and miles of vineyards and farms and the encroaching civilization of Europe.

But the intellectuals in Cairo and Fez, in Baghdad and Damascus continue to work desperately for Pan-Islam. Perhaps Islam's very passivity is its great strength. Ask an Arab about Pan-Islam, or about the weather, or about a job of work he is doing, and he will give you the same answer, a disarming device of fatalism and of Mohammed. He will say, with his voice, and his eyes and his hands, "In-cha Allah." . . . if it please Allah.

Chapter Twelve

The War Among Frenchmen

POLITICAL disunity in North Africa was not confined exclusively to the tribal Arab population. As I observed the French leaders, both in France and in the colonies, together with collaborationists and non-collaborationists, professional men and soldiers, editors, idlers and storekeepers, I could still see the tragic evidences of that political confusion which had undermined and weakened France through two decades of rapidly changing governments.

I had watched France pass through so many of those political upheavals. The nation which had performed the prodigious task of defeating Germany on the Marne and of checking her cold at Verdun for almost four years, became the victim of a victory complex which warped its sense of reality. France never claimed to have won the first world war alone, but she did fight the lion's share of it, and her offering on this altar of liberty was almost one and a half million dead. The new generation of Frenchmen did not seem willing to take on the moral splendor of their

fathers. Instead, they preferred as the years rolled on to engage in a virtual war against Frenchmen.

France played politics, not in the sense of cheap political slush-mongering that we know in America, but something even more dangerous: she played politics as between political parties. At one time there were nineteen separate political parties in the Chamber of Deputies, one of which, I understand, had as many as two members. The strong men, old Titans like Clemenceau and Poincare, were not replaced by Frenchmen of similar vision and sagacity. The generals and the marshals died off, as they are bound to do, and the men of Versailles, hated by Germany (and for very good reasons), dropped off one by one. Aristide Briand, one of the great Frenchmen of that epoch, a wonderfully brilliant, lovable, lazy, cigarette-smoking pacifist and a consummate diplomat, died with those watchful blue eyes of his turned on Germany. Briand was as far advanced on the question of general disarmament as any of the international leaders, but at the same time he demanded security against the Reich. He was a dreamer, but unlike many of his successors in the Foreign Ministry, he was not asleep.

Concurrently, men of lesser stature performed in the political circus that was France in that epoch. Among them was Tardieu, gifted protégé of Clemenceau. He fell ill before his career was fulfilled. Paul-Boncour was too busy as a lawyer. Bonnet was a short-sighted banker and a worse diplomat—it was he who was Foreign Minister during those horrible months of appeasement. It should be enough to record of

him that he signed a treaty of Franco-German amity with von Ribbentrop. And there was Daladier, a Pernod-drinking schoolteacher who grew out of his original mediocrity, but too late. And Blum who was an impractical idealist; his Popular Front was tantamount to one of Germany's first victories in its carefully planned war of revenge. There were the Sarraut brothers, who hopped about from one cabinet post to another like rabbits, but who were concerned mostly with political control of Southwest France. And there was Flandin, a super-wealthy bourgeois who failed to grasp the full meaning of Germany's rearmament. And Reynaud, arch-enemy of Bonnet, who justified his own economic theories for France, but attained governmental power too late. Herriot was competent and honest, but he had retired to Lyons. Edouard Herriot is perhaps today the one Frenchman who might unite the past with the present in starting France on a new future. He was respected by everyone; he knows all the corridors and ante-rooms of the Quai d'Orsay. But this charming, corpulent gourmet who could even deal with von Papen without coming off smirched, who wrote biographies of Madame Recamier and of Ludwig von Beethoven, is now a prisoner of the Germans.

In France's recent political past there were good men and clowns, patriots and mere politicians, apologists and appeasers, the latter of which found their highest expression in the record of Pierre Laval. I did not wonder, then, as one day on the wide terrace of the Café Tantonville, near

the Opera in Algiers, I heard a French journalist earnestly explaining to me that France was lost.

"Mais oui, mon ami, c'est fini," this man would keep repeating as I tried to tell him France would rise again. Always his comeback was the same. "France is finished. It has run its day. We cannot rise against the power of the Boche. I tell you, France is rotten—pourrie!" he concluded.

Fortunately, not all Frenchmen thought this way—but there was a considerable number who did. It was not exactly my job to try to sell France to Frenchmen. I could not hearten them by telling them that the United States would again fight with them to chase out the Germans. Frenchmen had already heard so much of American preparedness and its giant strength that they felt such boasting was merely American ballyhoo. I knew better, but I could only suggest that they have faith, if not in us, at least in their own country, their own people. There were books which some Frenchmen were re-reading to confirm their hopes in the youth of France, such as "*L'Honneur de Servir*" of Henri Massis, and there was some new poetry, breaking into the light through the crust of collaboration, as the tender green of the crocus and daffodil break through the winter that hangs on too long. The poet Aragon had written and published "*Le Crève-Coeur*," even through a wary censorship. One of his poems started:

"Ma patrie est comme une barque
quí a abandonnée ses haleurs . . ."

The same journalist whose defeatism had so disturbed me, told me of the beginning of the "war guilt" trial at Riom. He had reason indeed to be despondent, but not to be desperate. The trial was a farce and was indefinitely postponed because it turned out so badly—not for the accused, but for the prosecutors. Daladier shocked the court by explaining that to fix the war guilt was quite simple, since it was so obvious that it was Germany who was responsible for the war. Blum drew up his own brief, clearly stating that the trial was not only illegal but that the so-called government prosecuting them was unconstitutional. General Gamelin, chief of staff and war minister during most of the war, politely declined to testify because, as he explained somewhat delicately, his evidence might bring disgrace on some of the present leaders of the Vichy government, including Marshal Petain himself. This judicial farce was soon ended by the Germans.

But there were Frenchmen who adroitly explained it all away in the press so that in Algiers as well as in France the trial was forgotten, although the leading figures were still kept in German jails. The trial at Riom was a short-lived sensation, but it gave us surcease from the press attacks on England and on General de Gaulle. Whenever the press had no particular target to shoot at, it could always rake out de Gaulle and the French National Committee in London. The avalanche of abuse heaped on de Gaulle as a "renegade and mercenary" naturally affected de Gaulle's reputation in North Africa.

Even among some Frenchmen who were actually praying for a leader, for anyone to help them revolt against Vichy, there were those who would not accept de Gaulle. The anti-British stigma was burned in deep, and de Gaulle had been accused of giving the French Empire away to England. On the other hand there were and still are staunch de Gaullists in North Africa. The National Committee even had its underground representatives in Algiers. Curiously enough one of the chiefs of this movement was the manager of a certain de luxe hotel in Algiers, which the German Commission used as a headquarters for its members who couldn't find rooms in the Aletti.

When General Giraud escaped from Germany, new hope was born in Algiers. Some said he would join Weygand. Others said he would go to London or America. The left and liberal groups in Algiers said Giraud was a rightist and even a fascist and the leftists preferred de Gaulle, who was more identified with democracy and the United Nations. Then there were many others in Algiers who, although deploring the Nazi or Fascist form of government, sadly admitted that it was the only political stratagem that could save France. Today there is still a strong Fascist-minded group in North Africa who will support any kind of government which will protect them from Communism. Some of them have been genuinely fed up with corrupt, experimental republicanism in France. They fear Communism and they fear a dictator as well, but they honestly believe salvation lies in what they call a "controlled totalitarian

government." On the other hand, Communist opposition to this would be violent. The French Communist leader, Marcel Cachin, was still in France although reported in difficulties with the Germans. There were also several Communist deputies in Algiers who were jailed by Vichy, but set free when Giraud arrived.

During the war in France, I once covered the trial in Paris of thirty Communist deputies charged with trying to effect a defeatist peace with Germany. I know those French Communists. Their policy is to cause trouble and unrest whenever they are not in power. They were against the war with Germany and did everything to prevent it, although as a political group they despised the Nazis. The French Communists insist there is a wide difference between a Communist government and Nazi or Fascist totalitarian government. They would welcome a Communist regime in France but would violently oppose any Fascist form of government. I feel sure that they will sow fire and blood again on the soil of France if an eventual national assembly should come out of Versailles, where it should meet, with its emblem the Fascist ax instead of the Phrygian cap of a free France. There are enough refugee Communists in Algiers alone to form a new Communist party of considerable strength, should a new deal rescind Daladier's decree by which Communism was outlawed in France.

You can see that the war among Frenchmen had not ended with the Franco-German armistice. There was a

new battle plan, however, which might turn out for the better. It was the battle against Vichy. Vichy produced the Fascist or pro-German type of Frenchman which may yet cause all others to join in the universal offensive. Such a unifying trend was on the move in Algiers and it was growing with each day, but it would be a long time before it could attain effective leadership. You could easily see that an American invasion, popular and hoped for as it might be, would certainly be likely to have its baptism of fire from these elements which were partially responsible for France's defeat.

It was obvious that all these clashing political forces would provide real headaches when France's former Allies and friends attempted a landing in North Africa in the continuing war to drive out the Axis. It was going to be no easy task to liberate France and to break up the political disunity which had been prolonged by the dark suspicions with which so many Frenchmen regarded each other.

Chapter Thirteen

The Censor Decides My Role

WHEN the summer's heat is at its full in Algiers, the cafés and shops extend wide canvas awnings over the sidewalks as far as the trees that line the curb. This gives the cafés, especially the small ones, a remarkably attractive and sheltered appearance. The penetrating light from the glaring sun is toned down to a genial brightness. People drink tall glasses of Vichy and lemon juice with cracked ice, small cups of black coffee with iced water, goblets of pink wine with cold vapor forming on the glass, vermouth, muscatel, beer or mixed drinks. The warm weather is a good pretext for tarrying in these agreeable bistros, but the timeless philosophy of *Araby* plays no little part in this drinking and dalliance with friends.

Every morning while the trees and flowers were still fresh from sprinkling, we used to meet in a bright little corner café in the Rue de la Liberté, called the *Boule d'Or*, or the Golden Ball. We had an aperitif or two in quite informal intimacy before going to the Cintra for more "serious business." The café was near a bus station overlooking the

harbor. There big cars left for the beaches east and west and for many towns and villages in the rich farm belt that fringes the coastal plain. The café was often filled with plantation managers, experts in fertilizers, grapevine sprays and other concerns of colonial planters.

The *Boule d'Or* in particular was a haunt of the de Gaullists of Algiers as well as other anti-Vichyites. In the early summer of '41 it was still free from spies and informers and talk about the little horseshoe bar was uninhibited by censorship or fear. Later on it was so closely watched that the pro-French Frenchmen had to meet elsewhere.

Among the crowd were two American farm implement salesmen who used to meet there and talk about crops. One of them said to me one day: "Something will have to be done about motor fuel if they are going to harvest crops in North Africa." The government had removed almost all the gasoline and motor oil on orders from Vichy, and the big plantations were likely to reduce their planting. The farm machinery was also breaking down for lack of repairs, the Americans told me, and there were no means of getting spare parts from overseas.

One of these men said, "The Germans hope to steal our farm machinery trade here. The French machines are too light for this African soil, because while it is rich, it's caky and dry. But the New Order is far from materializing, so it looks as if North Africa will have to wait." He told me the planters and big colonists were "squawking to Vichy,"

and in addition were blaming the Germans for the blockade against American products.

In this café I heard much of the gossip of the big farms and the woes of the planters. I heard how productive the soil was and that hardly a mile outside of Algiers, toward Maison Carré, there were farms producing four crops of potatoes a year. Alfalfa, I knew, grew wild all along the railroad tracks. Often I had seen orange trees burdened with ripening fruit used for shade purposes.

"What they want over here," one of the tractor men explained another morning, "is a few scientific agriculturalists to develop uncultivated land. There are several hydro-electric power projects under construction in the dry regions which will open up thousands of square miles to irrigation, but they have no transport facilities." My informant shrugged his shoulders, "But why should they go ahead with them now? They would only have to turn everything over to the Germans and Italians—better to keep the land dry. Anyway, we're going home until the war's over."

Other friends in the *Boule d'Or* told me of the bumper African wheat crop. "It all goes out through Oran," a Frenchman said. "You should see the grain pouring in through the chutes, right into the holds of the ships, all to make good war bread for the Germans, while here in Algiers our bread is getting more like sawdust every day."

"And the wine," another of the *Boule d'Or* visitors added. "A million hectoliters is a lot of wine, but it is nothing here in Algeria. We're going to have our biggest vintage this

year; you wait and see. It will all be tanked over to France to be made into industrial alcohol for Germany—that is, if we can get enough sulphate of copper to spray the leaves. The Germans will make the French produce sulphate of copper to send here to produce wine alcohol for them.”

All this farm talk induced me to try to write about the agricultural situation. I had already met difficulties with censorship on military subjects. That was an old story. Censorship in Marseilles had been worse than at Vichy and censorship in Algiers was even worse than at Marseilles. So I decided to send the United Press some stories on the agricultural riches of the colonies. I realized I would have to refrain from criticizing the German drain on food products, but there was plenty of farm development news and irrigation and dry farming information that would be interesting to both North and South American clients of the United Press.

In those days Yves Chatel was head of the economic section of the Weygand Delegation which dealt with the agricultural development of the colonies. That was before he became Governor General. I explained my plans for writing some constructive stories to a secretary in Chatel's outer office. After a wait of half an hour, I was told that such publicity would be very compromising for the government. And the secretary added with a kind of wink, “You know, they do not want the Germans to realize what a rich agricultural region this is.”

Certainly, the Germans knew as well as the French that

an organized agronomy in North Africa could almost feed Europe. But all that had to be kept secret. Then I realized that it was going to be hard for me even to be a farm reporter in this splendid continental area, although a desert war between Britain and the Axis was already roaring on its eastern end in Cirenaica.

I was not satisfied with the kind of harmless news I was sending to the Vichy U.P. bureau for relay to New York. It was mostly items about General Weygand's visits to the other protectorates, speeches of this and that minister on a junket from Vichy, the so-called human interest stories about the Kasbah, the Mohammedan celebrations, visits to the deep Atlas by the Sultan of Morocco, and the official receptions between the resident governor of Tunisia, Admiral Esteva and the Bey of Tunis. Inasmuch as my stories were sent almost entirely by air mail to Vichy, they had to pass a postal censorship, and that kind of censorship is the worst of all. You never know what may happen to a letter.

Telegraphic stories I could present to the regular wire censors, and they said yes or no—mostly no, if I had any news. I reported my difficulties to the Consulate, only for their information and not for help. They showed a lively interest but little surprise. I recall describing a harmless Youth Group parade in a story for New York. The youths were dressed something like our Boy Scouts. My story did pass the censor, but imagine a Boy Scout story of that kind with a world war going on! And even in this I had to delete a phrase which said they carried hilted knives on

their belts. That fell under the classification of "military information."

And so I fell to translating editorials from the newspapers to show the trend of thought in Algiers. Even some of those gems of sophisticated sadness were censored because they were said to be "for local consumption." I could only laugh at that, for the French censors were themselves ashamed at such maudlin collaborationist sentiments as were expressed in these editorials. And what was worse, as time went on I kept hearing more and more news privately. I could hardly pass through the Hotel Aletti without picking up something that looked like a story. The Americans were full of news and my friend, The Judge, who by now had become a regular caller at the Cintra, was always good for a hint or a clue to something interesting.

The Judge was unlike the others of the American group. They would slip me plenty of stories and with all the details but of the kind that would never pass the censor. The Judge, in contrast, rarely talked about the "situation." He would never start a rumor. He would tell me what was *not* true. I brought him many a wild tip for confirmation only to evoke his disparaging laughter. On the other hand, I managed to bring him some interesting facts. As a newspaperman, I could go places where he, as a diplomat, shall I say, could not go, or even be seen. So the Judge and I started a little collaboration all of our own.

Meanwhile, there were persistent stories of Arab unrest circulating about. The Arabs had no white cloth to use in

the ceremonial burials of their dead. A follower of the Prophet absolutely must be buried in a winding sheet. There was no tea down in the desert and no coffee along the coast and very little sugar. Unrest among the Arabs is the bugaboo that every administration feared. Even the Germans would try to avoid that. The Germans would not mind a revolt, but they didn't want unrest. Revolt would have given the Germans an excuse for coming in to "establish order."

The *Boule d'Or* was enlivened one morning by a farewell party. The last of the American farm implement specialists was leaving for Tangiers, Lisbon and New York. How the French patriots envied him! They looked at his papers and fondly fingered his passport, gazing at his transit visa through Morocco. An agile fellow came along later who learned to fake American passports and transit visas for escaping de Gaullists. However, the American's papers happened to be genuine this time. Later on the bogus passport and visa traffic grew into quite an industry.

The departing American told me the last thing he had done was to give some estimates to the Weygand Delegation as to what North African farmers needed in the way of farm implements, spare parts, motor fuel, seeds and trucks. He said the authorities had also questioned him thoroughly as to the needs of the Arab population in cotton cloth, tea, coffee, sugar, barley, canned milk and tobacco. This did not surprise me, as the man had been in Algeria for years and had covered most of the trails in the southern territories.

"That must be for the Murphy-Weygand economic agree-

ment," I ventured, although I only suspected that such an agreement was in the making.

"That's right," said the American, "only please don't cable it until I get at least to Tangiers. It's a secret, but if it goes through, it will jump American prestige in North Africa about one thousand per cent. And if they can keep it up, North Africa will be ours for the asking, if we ever want to come in here. That one little thing would wash out all that the Germans have done with their bribes and boasting to the Arabs."

But my friend was indeed skeptical that the accord would ever win the approval of the Germans, although he said he believed the British had consented. The products would be shipped, naturally, on boats flying the French flag. There were some more rounds of farewell drinks before my friend left. America and France were toasted—and to hell with the Axis. This rumpus must certainly have been reported back to police headquarters; for the English and French languages were being strained for epithets suitable to describe the collaborationists, and the farewell party could easily sound like an incipient revolt. "If that agreement goes through," said this American, "it will be only because the Germans are worried about the natives, for they certainly don't give a damn for the French."

I dropped in at the Cintra "headquarters" and found the Judge.

"What will you have, before you slip me the real low-down?" he asked banteringly, for the Judge was never

quite himself until he had put the waiters to work. It was also a way of getting rid of them.

"That Murphy-Weygand agreement, is it signed yet?" I asked casually. The Judge's eyebrows rose and his squint narrowed. "Where'd you get that? I suppose the censors won't let you cable more than two columns on it." He greatly flattered my news sense by saying any sap could have guessed the story, then admitted that the accord was ready and awaiting approval of the Germans. The Judge then suggested in all seriousness that I try cabling the story. "We're still friendly to Germany, you know. We've got an embassy in Berlin."

Two days later I got down to trying a very cautiously worded cable dispatch and took it to the Vichy telegraphic censorship office. I had attributed the story to that old stand-by, an "authoritative source." Inside there was a closing and opening of doors and a buzzing of voices. Along with two or three telephone calls the commotion seemed to increase. Finally one of the officials whom I knew fairly well, came out with the dispatch. He stuttered, "This is, indeed, well, I cannot say . . . I think you will have to get it censored at the press office of the Weygand Delegation. Meanwhile, we shall get in touch with Vichy and—and, if you have got this exclusively, please don't say anything about it, that is, unless you can get permission. I'm afraid it's a little premature."

I was not at all surprised. This was, in fact, the usual reception for anything resembling intelligent news. An

economic agreement was certainly not a great story, but I suppose in that stuffy Vichy censorship command, a piece of real news must have come as a shock. So I rushed off in a taxi to the Weygand Delegation. I wanted to explain to them that I did not want to do anything wrong, or send a premature cable dispatch or in fact do anything that was unpatriotic or inconsiderate or rash, and that I would like to know if and when I could cable it.

When I arrived at the Press office of the Weygand Delegation in the Rue Bruse opposite the Winter Palace, a man from the Vichy censorship had already arrived in a car. General Weygand's press attaché had my dispatch in his hand when I entered his office. He looked at me quizzically. "Where did you get this?" he asked.

"I got it from a farmer," I told him.

"Well, you can tell your farmer," the press attaché went on, "that if he wants any supplies he had better keep quiet. It is very touchy with the Germans, and the whole thing may collapse any moment. We will let you know, and meanwhile forget it—as if it were not true." I could have got the story out by one of the de Gaullist underground couriers, but there is usually little honor in tricking the censorship. Now and then a story is worth getting out by underground, even at the risk of expulsion, but this was a different kind, for it was tied up with American penetration. So I forgot it.

It was weeks before the news of this simple economic agreement between General Weygand and Robert Murphy,

our chargé d'affaires, was published in the Algiers press. France was going to receive much needed products for North Africa, including motor fuel, and in exchange was exporting her products to America. About the only product which poor France had to export was cork, so I had the pleasure of watching a good ship sail out of Algiers harbor one day with a load of cork bark from the forests of Constantine. By that time it was no story and it was hardly worth cabling. Moreover, the American liberals were already campaigning against it because they said it would assure war materials for Germany.

But after the agreement was put into effect, we held it like a club over Vichy. It was suspended on more than one occasion when Vichy started playing German tricks, but both Vichy and Germany felt it was important for French North Africa, even at the risk of increasing America's prestige with the natives. I snooped around and soon found out just how important that economic exchange was for North Africa. The Arabs got cloth with which to give respectable burial to their dead; they had tea in the desert and sugar for their coffee. German propaganda could not belie those little made-in-America labels on the American so-called exchange products. When the first cotton cloth was distributed, the Germans tried to save themselves by having stories printed in the North African press explaining that thanks to widespread search and further sacrifice in France, several thousand meters of cloth had been procured and were being sent to North Africa for distribution. But the

trick did not work. Important Arab chiefs were informed by the Americans, and the Arab "grapevine" telegraph did the rest.

I kept on translating my editorials and picking up routine news from the press on a variety of unimportant subjects. Although I was somewhat conspicuous as the only American correspondent in Algiers, I found many doors opened easily to me, although they were shut stealthily after I got in. The American Lend-Lease arrangement was attaining flagrant proportions, in spite of certain fifth-column opposition in the United States. From my vantage point in North Africa I could clearly see that my country was moving steadily into the war against the Axis. (Pearl Harbor was just a "fortuitous" incident.) President Roosevelt's every speech was significant with threat and deep, unfaltering determination to preserve the institutions of human liberty.

Confidence in us was not shaken by delay. Everyone on the other side of the world could see we were preparing. We were doing an intelligent thing first in the Lend-Lease; we were arming our future Allies. The Axis was realistic enough to know that, and they could do nothing about it. Every day's delay meant added strength for our ultimate war.

As a young reporter in Philadelphia in 1916, I had had a vivid observation of the preparedness movement which shook the country into action under Woodrow Wilson. I recall President Wilson's more than eloquent speeches. And it was Germany that time as well, which was the uni-

versal enemy, not Hitler. I was as alive to the dangers of the situation then as I was now. The impressions I received had stayed with me throughout the years of apparent "peace," and I had grown increasingly anxious about the fate of my own country under the peril of isolationist propaganda. It is tragic that the memories of many Americans can be so short.

There is an ominous analogy between 1916 and 1941. Happily, President Roosevelt was well ahead this time. We already had a big army in the making and a two-ocean navy on the stocks. It was not President Roosevelt's fault that more vital things were not done. If we wish to remember Pearl Harbor, let us also remember Guam, and how Congress felt it would offend the Japanese if we should appropriate funds for its adequate defense!

On the first of August I happened to be alone at the Cintra Bar. A rather pleasant Frenchman I knew came up to me. "Your country has cost me a big dinner party," he said good-humoredly. He went on, "You see, last month I bet a group of my friends that America would be in the war before the first of August, or I would stand them a good dinner. Today I am paying off. Will you join us?" Another engagement prevented me from going along, but I watched the men gather and was introduced to most of them.

As they went into the Aletti dining room, the host said to me, "We know it is only a matter of time. And remember, when it does happen, I will give a bigger dinner. You

are invited." As a matter of fact, it seemed to us in North Africa that America's entry into the war might come at any moment, although nearly four months were to pass before it occurred.

At that time I thought of returning to America or asking for a more active assignment. But there was plenty of quiet action right in Algiers. I could see that there was an American "preparedness" force at work on the spot in North Africa. There was a British group, working steadily under cover; there was a de Gaullist crowd risking arrest and punishment by Vichy; and there was a non-committal section of the population which was out of step with Vichy and which rarely lost an opportunity of helping the Anglo-Americans. On the other hand, the Axis was doing what it could to forestall American penetration.

One thing was clear. Washington needed all the straight information it could get, for we must not go off half-cocked. There must not be another Dakar. So I stayed and tried to work as well as I could or as much as I was permitted, for I was still a fully accredited newspaperman. In addition to my regular news sources, I sought the charming association of the Judge, the other Americans, the British, the de Gaullists, and the well-informed French journalists. And so in this role, shall I say, of "frustrated correspondent," it was only natural that I should turn over my grist of rumors, reports and curious information to the Americans rather than offer them to the censors.

Chapter Fourteen

The Delectable Realm of Secret Agents

DURING the last half of 1941 to be neutral in North Africa and especially in Algiers was to attract suspicion. It was much better to be labeled collaborationist, pro-French, pro-American, or something else that the police could understand. The detectives' "welcome committee" in the Hotel Aletti, and all the other eight or nine affiliated counter-espionage groups looked upon everyone, man or woman, as a passive or active agent. In going my rounds as a newspaperman, I found that almost everyone of importance in Algiers was "up to something."

And as an American, with America's attitude in the war by then almost brutally apparent, I was beset on all sides by the representatives of every group. It was an interesting experience in psychology to decide who was telling the truth and who was not—who was *really* a collaborationist and who was not. So I proceeded to act on the established rule of believing nothing and nobody. I knew that I was (and quite correctly) ticketed as an American, pro-French, anti-collaborationist and certainly anti-Axis. And toward

those persons who were "doing something," I had to be especially cautious. Now and then you make a mistake. But you have to believe in someone, you have to take a chance on a man's telling the truth, to hope he is what he professes to be. You have to take that risk; it is one of the basic hazards of existence. The man who betrays you is soon found out, and the life of a worm, after all, is not worth much.

In those months prior to America's entry into the war, the strategy for Africa began to take on definite form. The Germans could not get their thoughts off that big Allied force in the British Isles and prospects of invasion through France, so they kidded themselves into believing that the United States would not, or could not, land in North Africa. Hitler made one major mistake in 1941. That was not to occupy and fortify French North Africa before he attacked Russia. However, German fifth-column penetration of Africa through Vichy went on apace. Admiral Darlan kept pouring in scores of Vichy appointees known for their collaborationist sentiments, as well as for their dire need of a good job. Obviously, they were the kind of Frenchmen whose loyalty was: job, first; country, second; honor, unimportant.

In North Africa, the Weygand Delegation was making progress with its work on the one hand and steadily losing out on the other, as the Germans gradually realized what General Weygand was doing. The Governor General of Algeria, Admiral Abrial, had been a colorless figure, not

even a good Vichyite, so the Germans consented to his replacement by General Weygand. The office of governor general, therefore, was incorporated within the service of the Weygand Delegation and it caused general rejoicing, although it meant no real change in administration. Admiral Abrial was shifted to the job of military prefect of the naval base of Toulon, as a sort of German-Vichy guardian of the French Fleet. Sometime before the change I had made a half-hearted attempt to interview Governor General Abrial, but he had always been "absent." I also looked up my erstwhile shipmate, Chief Sergeant Mejdoub Mohammed, of the Gouverneur Generale X, he who had been Admiral Abrial's cellmate in the German prison at Dunkirk.

General Weygand appointed Yves Chatel, head of his economic section, as Governor General Adjoint, and Chatel at least started out in the good tradition of Weygand. The Weygand-Murphy economic agreement was beginning to work and America's privileged position in French North Africa was virtually established and assured from then on.

In other words, we Americans had been more or less accepted as allies of the real French, of the British, the Belgians, the Dutch and other governments "in exile," and we were expected to do something about it. Naturally, we were henceforth all on the Gestapo blacklist, and consequently enemies of Vichy.

It is a novel sensation to be considered an enemy, an agent, a spy, an informer, and a person to be watched. But if you

definitely accept the honor and go ahead to merit it, life becomes a daily thrill. You are never bored.

I read in my youth that people do not arrive suddenly at the summit of vice, that evil is achieved by easy stages. The temptation to play the informer caught me one day when walking out of the Post Office. I met an English acquaintance whose continued presence in Algiers always surprised me. With him was a Frenchman who had the air of a government employee. I was introduced as an American journalist. The Frenchman seemed to be interested in me. We went to an almost deserted café in the Rue Mogador, back of the Rue d'Isly, and our pro-French sentiments bubbled up nicely over a few drinks of wine.

The Englishman assured his colleague that I was a good American and that I knew the right people. We talked of pre-war Paris and the war in France, and I found the Frenchman had been in the army radio and signal corps. He was in Algiers on a few days' leave and would soon return to a government radio post deep in the south. He was also a Parisian. We talked in happy memory of the wet, dark streets of Paris nights and inevitably, with such a bond of sentiment between us, a natural comradeship was bound to follow. The Englishman left and the Frenchman from the signal corps and I strolled along the Rue Mogador, up a steep flight of steps to the park that overlooks all of Algiers and its harbor. There the view of the Mediterranean is magnificent.

As we walked, the Frenchman took a pipe out of his pocket as if to light it and stuck it in his mouth. We walked and talked a bit more under the high eucalyptus trees.

"You could deliver a little message for me to your government, could you not?" he asked suddenly. Then he added, thoughtfully, "It would not be good for me to be seen going into your consulate. It is watched."

I had felt something like this was coming. Gladly I offered my help. "What is it?" I asked. "You know I am a journalist, but that does not prevent me from talking with all kinds of officials." He looked at me, I thought, a little scornfully.

"You are an American. I am a Frenchman," he replied. "Isn't that enough? We understand." I agreed that was quite enough.

He resumed, "You might save many lives and many ships—but you must do it quickly."

He was still chewing on his unlighted pipe, as I repeated my promise to help him. Regardless of his real position, pro-Vichy or anti-Vichy, I thought it would be interesting to see what he had. In these dealings, it must always be remembered that it is impossible to be a hundred percent certain. Yet, on his part, how did he know that I was a good American and not a Vichy informer?

There were some rocks at a turn of the road. The Frenchman stooped down and started knocking the ashes out of his pipe. He knocked very hard, then dug in with

his finger and drew out, somewhat to my surprise, a little square of folded tissue paper. "This is it," he smiled, as he unfurled a piece about twice the size of an ordinary cigarette paper. "Here is the frequency of my station at post X . . . in the South, also the position of a submarine nest in a sandy inlet off the Rio d'Oro, north of Mauretania, from which convoys to and from the Cape of Good Hope are attacked. Get it to the right people, and be careful. I return to my post tomorrow, and you can count on me. Your friend the *Anglais* is the liaison. He, too, has to be careful."

I put the folded slip in a package of cigarettes in my pocket and we walked on awhile before parting. I naturally turned the paper in to the American authorities. They said they had already been warned of the submarine nest. I learned sometime later that the British also had been warned, and the warnings all came from this same source. Also I heard that the enemy submarines had been routed and had to seek other hideouts. The British had protested to the Madrid government, since Rio d'Oro is Spanish territory.

This Frenchman was one of those true patriots to whom we can be grateful for the success of the American landing later. I did not forget him, although I never saw him again. In the same way that I made his acquaintance, I met others. It was impossible to avoid the web of intrigue, of watching and informing, of receiving requests to carry messages or distribute documents.

The Germans, the Italians and the Vichy government were spending hundreds of thousands of francs to collect all information possible about their enemies, while at the same time the local prefectures were actively at work on an intricate system of counter-espionage.

The Americans were busy, of course, but they avoided being spectacular and the consulate was certainly a poor source of income for informers. We always thought they were just a little bit penurious, as representatives of the powerful and rich United States government, and that they might do in Rome as the Romans did. They were accused of spending millions anyway, so they might as well have profited from their suspected position. In a place like Algiers, where every nation's conduct was so flagrant, an effort to be diplomatically correct was little appreciated or understood. However, Washington had its own way of doing things and perhaps I am not a qualified critic.

There was a British crowd in Algiers who worked with amazing dispatch and secrecy. You can always depend on dear old Britain to pay for what it gets. Their people were part of an organized system, and as men were used who were palpably Frenchmen, it was hard to catch them off their balance. Moreover, throughout this world, wherever you see a Briton, you see a potential agent. In these things the British have a quick and fearless patriotism. Here, for example, was the British "gang." First, they had a good man in every town in North Africa. The better ones were

toward the east. The worst, almost incompetent ones, were toward the west, let's say, in Tangiers.

In Algiers the chief was a Frenchman, called something like Chumbly. With him was a café hanger-on known by a name like Barry. These two worked with a group of informers who covered ships, railways and banks. I had proof of their efficiency when a patriotic French Foreign Legionnaire called on me one morning at my hotel to give me a news story. He told me a big motor truck convoy had arrived at Sidi Bel-Abbes, the famous headquarters of the French Foreign Legion, loaded with bars of the Belgian gold reserve which had been hidden near Dakar during the war. The gold bars were in wooden cases and were valued at several hundred million dollars. This gold had been transported from the Legion headquarters at Sidi Bel-Abbes by train to Algiers, the Legionnaire said, for he was one of the detail of soldiers chosen to guard it. This Legionnaire knew the gold bars would be handed over to the Germans by the French, since it had been delivered from the train by trucks to the Bank of Algeria, allied with the Bank of France. I tipped off the Consulate in a memo and later to cover myself as a newspaperman, I tried to send the story through Vichy to New York.

The Legionnaire had come direct from his guard detail to my hotel room to tell me the story, hoping in some way to prevent the Germans from getting the gold. I found the British already knew of it. That night there was an armed

guard about the back entrance of the Bank of Algeria. They were reloading wooden boxes on motor trucks, obviously to be taken to an airport. There I saw the Judge, casually driving nearby in his American car. He picked me up and we went on to his hotel for a chat. It was hard to beat the British.

There was one thing in favor of the British. Their consulate had been closed and they worked through the Americans who had officially taken over their interests. The Americans had an official status, but the British worked underground, with great skill and efficiency, and if the police knew of it, they kept it quiet.

Every morning for breakfast "coffee," we used to meet at the little bistro near my hotel opposite the American Consulate. There were some Americans, two or three Frenchmen who scorned to hide their activities to the point where they became embarrassing, and a charming Englishwoman, as pretty as she was well known. The Judge would often drop by, radiating a slight suggestion of well-groomed hang-over. In the months to come, the little bistro attained an unsavoury renown almost rivaling the *Boule d'Or*, which had been the de Gaullist rendezvous.

Not to be outdone by the Anglo-Americans, the Germans established a "center" just opposite the bistro in the shop of a milliner. The Germans came and went in their American and German cars and continued to be most mysterious, but the milliner's shop and the bistro never came to an open clash. At the bistro we traded rumors and drank pink wine

while the Germans dropped in for their "hats" and moved on. I presume the milliner's shop has been properly investigated since the American occupation and the break with Vichy.

The bistro also served as a United Press Office, so that when one of my callers at the hotel became too eloquent or too vociferously anti-Vichy, I would adjourn to the bistro for safety's sake, knowing that hotel rooms are ideally situated for concealed microphones. Two anti-Nazi Germans also joined our group at the bistro. They had been in the Foreign Legion and from one of them I was taking lessons and reviewing my almost forgotten German. The bistro naturally attracted the attention of the prefecture "dicks" so they would drop in quite casually for coffee.

When possible we would talk a little German, just to complicate matters. Nothing succeeds so much as confusion. This was a theory the Judge produced one morning over his third or fourth beer. Turning to me with his glass in the air, and in his most professorial mood, he said, "They know who I am here, but then, as I ask myself, do they? Suppose I have a letter in my pocket written in invisible ink. I don't know the origin since it came through the mail and there is a postal censorship and it's up to them to stop it. Here you are talking in German to a man whose brother is a Nazi army officer (that was true) and there is a charming English lady whose market basket is full of sugar from the Black Market. Standing in the door is a Czech aviator who is reportedly working for three foreign

offices, and if we all keep on drinking the way we are, even the two Vichy detectives across the bar will have to get drunk to keep up with us, and I will not be able to dictate a good report on the canned milk supply for which I came to Africa. So how can they check on us?"

It was obvious that the Judge's regular method was, as he said, "to confuse and confound the enemy." Since the assorted agents and counter-agents would suspect all of us anyway, the best thing to do was to make them think we were absolutely crazy. The Judge pointed out that no Americans could escape scrutiny in that setting, so why not try baffling them a bit?

But the Judge was not always in ribald humor. One night there was "serious business" in the semi-blackout of Algiers. A submarine had been sighted blinking a signal off the coast. On the morrow some important de Gaullist Frenchmen disappeared, headed for Gibraltar. The charming English lady concerned with newspaper packages from the Black Market, the Judge and two or three others stayed away from the bistro for several days. As a newspaperman I could still prowl in and out without suspicion, but I think something really serious was born of this incident.

I knew a group of Frenchmen who had been planning for weeks to escape from Algiers in a small boat. However, not even all of these men could be trusted implicitly. One of them was an interpreter in the postal censorship. He had become very clubby with me and told me plenty of gossip

of the censorship, and occasionally he would read my letters, on order from the Post Office. Sometimes he would praise, sometimes disapprove the information I had sent out on military subjects. In other words, he knew some of my inmost secrets. He had been a general staff interpreter in the war, attached to Lord Gort, and he carried a silver cigarette case marked with a British crest. It was he who first told me I was being carefully watched and to be very discreet.

This seemingly pro-British Frenchman came to me one day and asked me if I would like to get a message to Lord Gort. He confided to me that he and his little band were about to shove off in a sailing boat for Gibraltar and, knowing Lord Gort personally, he volunteered to carry a message, as he put it, "from the Americans or the British."

I told him I had nothing in particular to say to Lord Gort, but suggested he see the British about it. I made an appointment for him at the bistro with a certain English friend, and let them discuss things together, but with a warning first to the Englishman to check on the other if possible before compromising himself. It turned out that his record would not bear investigation by the British crowd in Algiers and the deal fell through. Poor Lord Gort had to go without word from us.

There is no doubt that this so-called postal censor got well in with the British crowd, but with what results I do not know. I do know that he was in some sort of legal trouble and men in dire trouble are dangerous, sometimes to

both sides. He had been very friendly and helpful to me, and was an excellent interpreter. He disappeared for awhile until he and his companions, of whom two were women, were arrested, charged with organizing an embarkation party from Algeria. As organizer he was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

Italian espionage apparently was far less effective than that operated either by the Gestapo or Vichy. Most of their force seemed to be used in protecting the members of the Italian Commission. They did use the conventional setup of men, women and Arabs for collecting information, but nobody seemed to worry much about them.

One event caused no little amusement in Algiers. When the gambling casino in the Hotel Aletti was being altered before reopening, the Italians had to give up some of their space in the hotel, so they requisitioned the Hotel Angleterre and its excellent restaurant, the Café Anglais. They took off the café sign and blocked the street door halfway up with concrete, but they had to leave the enormous vertical sign, Hotel Angleterre, on the facade. When they moved in, nearly everyone said with a sly smile that that was as close to England as the Italians would ever get.

One of our American consular clerks, with a good Irish name and just enough of Old Erin in him to make him tough, refused to leave the hotel until he had found other quarters. He was within the law and knew it, so he demanded his rights—and got satisfaction. This “penetration” of American influence in the “sacred privacy” of the

Italian-occupied hotel intensely amused the French authorities. Finally, but in no great hurry, he located another dwelling.

Prior to the Italian invasion of the Angleterre, many of the commission dined regularly in the Hotel Aletti. I was in the dining room on more than one occasion when one or another of the Italians would order the waiter to set on the table a special crock of butter, containing at least one pound, fresh from the icebox. When butter was only a fond memory for most people in North Africa, the Italians with unblushing effrontery would continue to flaunt their butter before the crowd of hungry diners.

But the French authorities had a sweet revenge on some of these Fascist gentlemen. Through postal censorship and other means of detection, they caught a little group of women and girls who had been on somewhat too intimate relations with the Italians, giving them of their tenderest ministry and according them their unstinted confidence. And for this the ladies, who were well known in the community, were arrested in public, whereupon their heads were shaved and short sentences of banishment imposed on them. When their sentences had expired, most of them returned to Algiers, concealing their short tresses in fashionable turbans.

Probably the most ironic story of the Italians was an event which occurred months later when rationing had left the people only the barest necessities. Suddenly the head of the Italian Commission died in Algiers—of acute indiges-

tion. The Italian's death was mentioned at a party which I attended in a certain house. A Parisian journalist, noted for his wit, observed, "*Le gest suprême du vainqueur!*"

I did have one not exactly pious souvenir of the Italian Armistice Commission under the regime of this same late chief. It was at a time when a certain distinguished-looking captain of the British Grenadier Guards was about to leave Algiers. He had been wounded five times in Belgium, and because of this disability, a French army commission had agreed to allow him to return to England. He had arrived originally in Algiers after a circuitous escape from a German prison. We decided on a little party at the Cabaret de Paris in the Hotel Aletti. The Guards captain brought along another wounded British captain, and we had a pleasant evening, drinking moderately and watching the floor show.

The Italians had got wind of our party with these two well-known British officers, who despite their wounds and limping gaits were both pictures of ruddy, breezy good health. A member of the Italian Commission had asked the French authorities for an explanation as to why these British were allowed such liberty, when most Englishmen of military age were in a prison camp. The French declared they were on authorized leave.

Our little party went off all right and there were no further complications. However, a few days later, some friends in the administration called us newspaper correspondents in to give us a little object lesson in discretion. They played a phonograph record for us, reproducing our

own voices and those of the British officers, interspersed with musical interruption and applause. It had been made the night of our party in the Cabaret de Paris.

Fortunately we had been very discreet, for the recorded conversations went something like this: "Let's have another round . . . Very well . . . What'll it be, the same thing? Okay, another Scotch . . . No, thank you, I'll stand on this one. Good show, oh, very good . . . One more, old man. Oh, come on, Captain, just a night cap . . ." There was also some indistinct talk about the artists and certain unnamed friends, but absolutely nothing of suspicious implications.

It seems that in view of this extraordinary assembly of British forces in the shape of exactly two captains, the Italian Commission had insisted on planting a microphone underneath our table. One of the French police officials thought the result a good joke, but warned us that such records might be made when we least suspected it, so it might be well to be careful. Indeed, it was this sort of surveillance that one had to anticipate everywhere and at any hour.

Chapter Fifteen

The Germans Called It Espionage

ONE morning there was a sharp staccato knock at my door. I had been trying to write a nondescript story on some worthless subject which I hoped would get past the wolf-pack in the Post Office, and I was feeling anything but kindly toward the regime of Marshal Petain in Vichy. The coffee had been getting so bad in the bistro that one had to have the good temper of a born clown to conjure up even the shadow of a morning smile.

I opened the door and in stepped an Austrian, American-born, who for weeks had been pestering me about his American citizenship papers which he had never obtained. I had regularly referred him to the Consulate, but he said he couldn't get any satisfaction. He explained that the Germans considered him a German, but because he had fought in the French Foreign Legion and had been demobilized, he was allowed to work for the French government.

I have seen few men so anxious, so eager to become an American citizen. He knew he was under suspicion, and therefore tried in every possible way to prove his loyalty

I had told him not to come to my room, and we adjourned to the bistro for more of that vile coffee.

I could see by this time that my Austrian caller had something deadly serious on his mind in addition to his usual citizenship worries. We sat at a table instead of standing at the zinc bar in order to converse better. He leaned forward and talked as if he were confessing a crime.

"I have just come from seeing a high German official," he said. "They want me to go back to the United States. They know I was born there, and they sounded me out this morning about the possibilities of getting an entrance visa. What do you know about that?"

"Well, why don't you go?" I suggested somewhat dryly. "Think what a good German spy you'd make!"

His face showed actual pain. "Christ, do you think I'd do that? I came to see you for your advice. Also to tell you something funny." I assured him I believed him, and he continued more calmly:

"First, the Frenchman in my office who is the liaison with the Secret Service tipped me off that you were going to be arrested. I think he expected me to tell you. Anyhow, that's that. And now, I want your advice. My French boss has suggested that I try a little work with the Germans, you know, pretend that I am still a German and try to pick up what I can from them. That's why I saw the Germans this morning. I felt them out, and it would be easy. Right away they asked me to find out about you, about Mr. X in the Consulate and about American rubber plantations in Liberia

and if the Americans are building one or more airports there." He laughed nervously. "That's all. Not bad, eh, for a morning's work?"

Ordinarily, it would be ridiculous to try to advise a man in such a predicament. But there were so many people all around me with mixed nationalities and divided loyalties resulting from the New Order that the Austrian's case was simple. I suggested that he should go ahead and play with the Germans and meanwhile work on his American citizenship. I knew he had little chance of obtaining an entrance visa until the war was over.

"But if I work a little with the Germans, won't that queer me eventually with the French?"

"If you work for the Vichy French you might as well be working for the Germans," I remarked.

And then he told me, lowering his voice, "I work for the French, but not the Vichy French. There are only two of those bastard Vichy French in the office. One is a German; the other is an Arab who thinks he's an intellectual. Do you know what the bosses are always asking me? Well, they want me to pump my American friends to learn if they are planning to invade North Africa." There were only a few thousand people who wanted to know that, I informed the Austrian, and added that I hoped we would. However, I made it clear that I was not able to enlighten him.

The upshot of this interview was that I had regular

so-called "inside information" from the Germans, and even some of their best "rumor propaganda" that my Austrian friend was detailed to give me. It was wonderful how naive these clever propagandists can sometimes be. For instance, through me, as a newspaper correspondent, the Germans told this Austrian that things were going badly in the Reich, that German mothers were rioting, screaming, "Give us back our sons." I was also told that food conditions were getting worse and that the German workmen were on the point of revolt against synthetic diets which gave them no real strength.

Naturally, I would not attempt to spread such nonsense. If the German mothers were calling for their sons, they must know their calls were falling on deaf ears. And if the German workmen were really complaining about synthetic foods, they apparently had thrived and prospered on bad nourishment. This propaganda formula was skillfully designed to make Americans relax their vigilance and to produce a false sense of security. It had worked well with the French in 1939, but it was worn out by the time it reached me for the second time in Algiers.

I knew the Vichy Germans were trying to have me arrested, since I had heard it even from our own consular sources, but it was never quite clear as to just what the charges were against me. Members of the German Armistice Commission, although located in Casablanca presumably, were more and more in evidence at the Aletti. There was

one chief whom I saw everywhere. He was a captain who carried one of those *schmissen* or facial scars that the bold and the brave pick up in Heidelberg saber duels. We called him Scarface.

Through my Austrian friend, I always knew when Scarface flew to Casablanca, or when he returned, or when he packed off on a mysterious jaunt to Italy. And old Scarface always kept in touch with me through the Austrian. So I used casually to get it over to Scarface that I was going to London, that I was flying to Washington, or contemplating a trip to Tunis.

The Germans became worried about our growing consular staff in North Africa and spread the report that the Americans had one thousand agents running about acting as government employees. First they tried to have the Vichy government suppress our consulates in North Africa, but with an ambassador at Vichy that was hardly possible. When the United States opened a consulate in Brazzaville (Free French territory) on the Congo and one in Oran, Algeria, old Scarface grew especially fidgety. Although I was sending regular news stories (such as they were) to Vichy, Scarface and his friends started rumors going that I was not a newspaperman and that my United Press connection was only a blind. They also said I was a Jew, offering my Biblical Christian name of Samuel as proof.

General Weygand had never consented to the Germans' reopening their pre-war consulate in Algiers since, he

claimed, France was only in a state of armistice with the Germans. This infuriated the Nazis, and although his technical point was sustained, to the extent that the old consulate remained closed, Vichy arranged that the Germans were finally permitted to open a new consulate. This new building was more strategically located, up on the Boulevard Bru, overlooking the entire harbor and ideally situated for a sending station. That made Scarface much happier.

The Italians counted on a big force of stone masons, house painters and skilled laborers working in North Africa, to form a fifth column in case of Axis invasion. Those workmen are probably still there, under the new French-American regime, although of course by now they would all call themselves good Frenchmen. The Germans worked more with the administrative groups; they pulled strings in higher places. They brought over a stocky little Gestapo chief and let him organize the usual Gestapo connections with the "conquered" power, as at Vichy.

Inasmuch as the Gestapo trusts no one, hardly even itself, being generally detested by the regular German armed forces, who have their own little detective bureau, the main Gestapo maintained its own group of informers in North Africa. Nevertheless, they depended for operational jobs, as it were, on the French-Vichy surveillance, and there was not much that escaped their notice.

One day I saw Scarface and a group of German Commission stooges investigating an apartment house which

looked down on the areaway and parking place of the United States Consulate. Scarface saw me staring at him and they moved on, simulating unconcern. What they were after and what they eventually got was a man in an apartment who could watch the comings and goings of our Chargé d'Affaires Murphy, and of various vice consuls. I am sure Scarface thought I was snooping on him, but I was quite innocent that time. I was merely coming down the back stairs of the consulate trying to find The Judge to buy him a drink. That shows what happens to people who drink.

Despite the Gestapo network in North Africa, someone in somebody's gang managed to get a job done once in awhile. For instance, there was an Italian cargo ship moored in the industrial harbor of Algiers for weeks. It was loaded with iron ore, en route to Italy. The British and Americans were watching it, and it seems that certain foreign powers had been tipped off. The British then put out a slick little rumor that they were out to get this ship and if it did not move out, they would consider Algiers harbor as sheltering contraband and would come and bomb it. Algiers had exactly nine anti-aircraft guns when I was there and not much ammunition.

General Weygand became concerned about a possible bombing of his metropolis and, I heard, ordered the Italian ship to move on. They waited. The General again ordered them out, saying they would draw enemy fire and were endangering a neutral port. Finally, the ore ship shoved off.

But before it had progressed far along the North African coast, it met its doom. Ships laden with iron ore do not drift about when torpedoed.

In the port of Tunis, called la Goelette, another ore-laden Italian ship was also harbored. It had been there some days when one morning, the good folk of Tunis awoke and saw only the two mastheads of the ship sticking out of the water. Someone had performed a neat piece of sabotage in scuttling the ship.

Incidents of this sort did not serve to improve the relations between the Germans and the Vichy administration. In Algiers itself many of the people were apathetic. Their minds had probably dried up in the sun. But a considerable section of the population was alive and alert.

Up until the time I left Algiers, in the summer of 1942, the only distraction was created by the motion pictures. The cinemas were usually crowded. Before I left, I saw some of our best American films, and although they were somewhat old, it did not matter. For example, the picture, "Good-bye Mr. Chips," had such a run in a central theater of Algiers that it came back for a second showing. The Germans were not exactly pleased. In the second run they deleted some of the war action, although the view of the British school and college life and the underlying lesson of the film were vastly appreciated. I saw crowds wait in line to see "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington." The film was given in English with French captions. The parts dealing with Abraham Lincoln and the preservation of liberty and government in

the hands of the people were heard in breathless silence by the audience. I heard Frenchmen applaud Robin Hood, where a parallel was drawn, obviously, between the usurping Norman barons and the usurping Germans in France. I heard French people applaud a part in Gunga Din in which British heroism was extolled. The censor quite naturally would not let me send such a story.

In a region where all the normal pleasures had been removed or restricted and where the radio was merely a monotone of German propaganda, the people leapt at such films as "Broadway Melody" or "Love Affair," or "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs."

On the other hand, the Germans were trying to develop a taste among the French for Nazi films. The reception of these was sad, indeed. The percentage of American films was naturally lower than the figure set for French films. The German quota was somewhere in between, but invariably the German films lost money for the distributor, unless they were given free. Moreover, they were badly done, badly acted and so sickeningly sentimental that I have heard people laugh at what were meant to be the most solemn or tragic scenes. The German film posters even tried to disguise the origin of films by displaying the "French" names of the actors in big type.

The Germans had little or no luck in their penetration through the cinema. In the realm of news reels, their failure was complete. In fact, the so-called news reels consisted of

badly photographed, dull, dismal and depressing pictures of Petain going about through France. These were the worst pictures they could have shown, for they only intensified the refugee Frenchman's longing for his native country and emphasized the horror of German occupation. The habit of walking out when the news reels were put on became general. Cinema palaces grew to be almost empty during these dull moments. Finally, as the crowds which collected outside the cinemas during news-reel time caused some comment in the newspapers, the police authorities decided to intervene. They tried various ways of enforcing respect for Vichy's news reels.

First, a printed circular was posted in the lobby of each theater prohibiting the public from leaving the auditoriums just before or during the news reels. Second, they prohibited the cashiers from announcing the exact time when the news reels were to be shown, so that people would not wait outside until they were over before buying their tickets. The only way to avoid a Vichy news reel was to contact someone who had seen the show, then enter or leave the hall accordingly.

On two occasions during my last months in Algiers, I witnessed serious incidents during the news reels. One near-riot occurred in a big theater when they showed the Vichy funeral services for the French War Minister, General Huntziger, killed in a plane crash en route to Vichy from Algiers. The film showed a close-up of several German high

officers in full regalia standing with Marshal Petain. The crowd hissed and whistled and booed so much that in the next showing of the film the Germans were deleted.

The worst demonstration occurred right after the RAF had bombed and entirely wrecked the huge Renault automobile plant on the fringe of Paris where tanks were being turned out for Germany. The pictures, naturally, did not show any of the demolished factories. They showed only the few apartment houses that were hit, and with revoltingly bad taste, the actual pictures of maimed and mutilated bodies of women and children. Everyone knew why the British had raided the Renault works and that they had warned the French well in advance to get out of the way. But what revolted the French most was the showing of a close-up of German officers in full dress uniform assisting with mock piety the solemn mass celebrated for the dead in the Cathedral of Notre Dame.

When I saw this picture for the first time people stood up and protested. I heard not one word of reproach against the British, although the whole film was designed to stimulate hatred for the "cowardly British." But there was an instantaneous reaction against the Germans. They yelled and booed and called out, "Assez, assez! (Enough, enough!)"

A member of the Legion Francaise, that Germanized party organization which venerated Marshal Petain and the collaborationists, tried to silence the crowd. He was surrounded and howled down. Another Legion member, with

a shrill voice, screamed out, "At least, have some respect for the Marshal." A man next to me, with an equally high voice, replied, "Come over here and I'll crack your jaw." The demonstration died down, but the next night I went again purposely to see what would happen, and I noticed the Germans had been deleted from the film, and there was quiet.

The Germans kept away from the cinemas, although they sent their informers. I met Scarface only once at a motion picture, and that strangely enough was one of those American nature-fake pictures which showed a man attacking a shark in the shallow waters off Florida. In fact, this picture gave quite a few submarine shots of deep sea fishing, either off Florida or in the Caribbean, and I recall Scarface was unusually interested. I thought perhaps he might, just by chance, be looking for a nice, convenient nesting ground for German submarines.

Long after we were in the war with Germany, I heard that Vichy had prohibited the showing of American films altogether in France and the colonies. I know this must have come as a blow to the North African public, because it left them only the French and German pictures. The American films had been stopped abruptly by the Germans, I heard, because it was asserted that "they were used to convey secret intelligence to de Gaullist sympathizers." Certain words, names and pictures were being used as a part of a communications system between Americans and Frenchmen, the Germans claimed. That might be possible,

even in the oldest of films, and I only hope we were intelligent and ingenious enough to have done so. Personally, I think it was just one more of Monsieur Laval's little tricks, giving added emphasis to his devoted prayers for the ultimate victory of the Axis.

Chapter Sixteen

Escape from Dishonor

WE SHALL never know just how many Frenchmen escaped from Vichy-controlled North Africa to join the British or the Fighting French in the continuing war against the Axis. Most of them made their escape in small boats, but not all were lucky enough to be picked up by a British ship or to navigate successfully the hundreds of miles of perilous seas to Gibraltar. There were certainly some losses at sea, for the voyage from Algiers to Gibraltar is more than four hundred miles. With a fair breeze, good weather and straight sailing, the minimum time for the trip was estimated at nine days.

You had to be a patriot to do that, to crowd into a clumsy sailboat, economize on drinking water and cold food, submit to every physical inconvenience and come near to succumbing from weariness and fatigue. And all that meant risking your life only to risk it again in the war against Germany and its rapacious allies. The hazards of the voyage to Gibraltar were encountered only after you had accomplished the seemingly impossible in getting away from land.

Every precaution had been taken by the authorities to

prevent Frenchmen and others from re-entering the war with the United Nations. France was in a state of armistice with Germany and presumably not supposed to re-enter the war on either side, yet it was quite easy to join with the Germans by enlisting in the "Legion against Bolshevism." However, to those who wanted to fight for France, every harbor was closed by a barricade of barges, lashed end to end, and these were opened only on order from the port authority. Along the entire coast was a patrol of customs soldiers, belonging to one of the best disciplined corps in North Africa. Along the entire coastal stretch from the Atlantic ocean side of Morocco to the Tripolitanian frontier of Tunisia, no small boats were allowed out except a few authorized and rigidly controlled fishing boats, and even they were not allowed to fish in the deep sea. Their catch was mostly sardines. Vichy could not trust even the fishermen to get very far away from land, knowing they would never come back.

Yacht club members were allowed to frolic in the near surf once or twice a week, each little craft being carefully checked on passing and returning through the barrier, although those swift, frail sailing boats were hardly sturdy enough to brave an eight-day run to Gibraltar. Water and food supplies alone would have been impossible to store on board in sufficient quantity. The ideal escape boat was a small motor ship with a sail, able to transport from three to a dozen men. Yet it was almost impossible to hide away

enough gasoline to run the motor more than a few miles, if it would run at all.

During the first months after the armistice, ships had left from every North African port for Gibraltar, but the Germans and Italians soon forced Vichy to clamp down restrictions. All owners of boats had to register them; a boat could not be sold or traded without investigation by the police; boat builders were strictly forbidden to construct ships, even if they had had the material to build them. But I knew personally several groups who left from the coastal points about Algiers in spite of these regulations. One daring party even left from the harbor itself, right under the eyes of the Admiralty.

When my British acquaintance, the wounded Captain of the Grenadier Guards, departed from Algiers he left behind one of his close friends, a Captain Bradford, then ill in the British hospital, but slated for the British prison camp after convalescence. The Guards captain reached Tangiers and wrote me from there how delightful it was to be free again. He was enjoying a round of cocktail parties and hoped to arrive at Gibraltar in a few days. He added that he would be grateful for any news of his friend Bradford. In due time the Guards captain caught a boat for Gibraltar. The first man to meet him when he walked down the gangway at Gibraltar was Bradford.

Captain Bradford's escape from Algiers was all the more noteworthy since he and his companions had left from the harbor itself in broad daylight. With three or four com-

panions, one of whom was a member of a yacht club, they managed to get a sailing permit and to set off in one of the heavier sailboats. Outside the jetty they simulated bad yachtmanship and floundered about so that the seaman on guard duty had to call to them to beware the seawall. They finally zigzagged over to Cape Matifou and got back. It was still too early to check in, so they attempted another floundering trip to the Cape, after getting some sailing advice from the guard. Again at Cape Matifou they started back to the harbor, but as dusk began to fall, and as the little yachts were checking in at the harbor one after the other, the wayward boat suddenly became remarkably capable and darted off to sea in obviously experienced hands. When the guard turned in the permit cards, there was one missing, but he could not believe it was the yacht of the "amateurs" he had seen lashing about near the seawall. The poor seaman was given thirty days in the brig for his carelessness, although Bradford and his party got off to Gibraltar without further incident.

With each escaping group, the Armistice Commissions would vigorously protest to the French authorities. Finally the restrictions became utterly ridiculous. One day I hired a ten-foot rowboat at the Week-End bathing beach near Algiers, just to have a little exercise. I was in bathing trunks with absolutely nothing else in the boat but an inch of water in the bottom. Nevertheless I was hailed as I passed a certain big rock well off the shore. I pulled away not heeding the call. But in a few moments I saw a man armed

with the badge of authority put out in a small boat. I waited until he came close enough to talk, and learned that I was violating the Vichy shore control regulations.

"Not beyond that rock," the man said, pointing back toward the beach. The rock was about two hundred yards from the shore. "Do you think I'm going to row to Gibraltar in this tub, with no water, no food and in bathing trunks?" I asked the man.

He waited until I put about. "That's the law and you'd get fired on from the shore if you had gone any farther," my rescuer explained. After that I desisted from further rowboat expeditions.

On the shore the various informer services were keyed up to a high pitch of excitement, turning in the names of those who were suspected of planning getaways. They were forced to watch, like Janus, in two directions. One trail was over the water to Gibraltar; the other was southward through the southern territories to the Sahara and the British and Free French colonies beyond. Many risked being arrested by desert patrols and braved the hardships of thirst and hunger to reach even that borderland region back of Dakar where Vichy discipline was remote, if it existed at all.

The government fell to such ignoble depths that it adopted the practice of using stool pigeons to catch unwary patriots. These unconscionable worms would snoop about quietly organizing an escape party until everything was set, the boat purchased, the supplies gradually and stealthily put

on board, and naturally each man's share of the money put in, when, as planned, the police would swoop down and arrest the whole group, including the Vichyite. He would be released later. After two or three episodes of that sort, the patriots exercised scrupulous control of the individuals on each party. They moved only in groups of old, trusted friends. The one charged with finding the boat performed that duty in his own way without a word to the others. None knew, except him, where the boat lay. Another was charged with assembling the food supply and water. Another was navigator. Another did the financing. Suddenly there would be a rendezvous, always distant from the boat. Then they would proceed in a group through the night to the anchored boat and as quietly as possible take off.

The boat was usually "stolen," since no sales were permitted. It was done like this. The man charged with finding the boat would spend a fortnight or so looking about among old fishermen in small towns outside the main ports. They would find a likely craft, inspect it, inquire the price, learning that "unfortunately it could not be sold." As soon as the right kind of owner was found, and the price, usually double or even triple its real value, was established, the deal was practically on. In the two or three weeks it took to sneak on the food supply, or hide it near the boat, the owner was given a fair sum, pending so-called legalization of the sale. But the sale was never consummated; that is, legally. The boat was stolen; the fisherman usually stormed

and protested to the authorities, carefully concealing his money.

In Algiers the headquarters of the departing patriots was the little café of the Golden Ball. At one time, departures were agreed upon between friends and arrangements were practically completed, all in this cheerful bistro which was in the Rue de la Liberté, certainly an appropriate address. There, in addition to American farm implement specialists, I met French demobilized officers and refugees from Paris, British prisoner-soldiers on parole, Poles, refugee Jews from everywhere, former Foreign Legionnaires and later, quite naturally, the secret police. Before surveillance was tightened up, I was present at several openly planned getaways. It seemed that everyone knew the names, and even the kind of ship they were sailing in. While there was still plenty of food, the supply problem was easy. The principal thing in those days was the risk of the long sea voyage.

I knew one French aviator, “gonflé” as they said in their patriot slang, who had already flown to Gibraltar and back twice. That word *gonflé* was very expressive; it was the keyword to describe whether or not a man was ripe and ready to go. Literally, it means blown up, but the sense in which they used it meant that the man was fed up with Vichy and with the collaborationists and was ready to take any risk, to go anywhere, anytime, to get into the fight.

This fine aviator whom I knew had three companions, also *gonflé* and also airmen. Friends called them the four

musketeers. But the one who had come back to fetch his comrades, made one trip too many. His end was a tragic story. It seems the British had asked the French to stop flying photo planes or observers over Gibraltar, warning them that all such planes would be shot down as a matter of precaution. This flier had not heard of the order, and on making his last trip to Gibraltar, hoping finally to get into active service, he mistook the British warning signal for a sign of welcome and swooped down to land. He was killed in the crash of his plane.

One of these four musketeers had good reason to be *gonflé*. His wife had been killed by the Germans in Rennes while she was driving an ambulance; his brother, who was a physician, had died in a German prison camp; his chateau in the North (for he was a nobleman) was in ruins. It was hardly tactful to talk collaboration with him. He was tall and knightly and had a very gentle voice and you could always sense something about him of the chivalry of old France. He managed to get away successfully from Casablanca and join the Fighting French.

I knew many in those days who were genuine patriots. It is easy to understand why the little café was soon invaded by those vermin from Vichy, and why it was replaced by other "headquarters."

Many of the patriots who escaped were not de Gaullists; that is, they were escaping because they wanted to fight for France and against Germany and Italy. They did not think of France in terms of any exiled leader in particular. Later

they probably joined the de Gaullists because this was the one already established organization preparing for serious battle against the Axis.

The feeling toward de Gaulle, even among certain people in Vichy-appointed positions, was best illustrated by a speech made by one of the generals under Weygand who took over the command of the land forces in North Africa. At that time one of his staff officers told me about the speech made confidentially to the men. The commander said to them: "I know that some of you men are de Gaullists. I have nothing to say about that, except that whatever you do, don't get caught and don't compel me to resort to discipline. Moreover, I do not want anyone to carry tales, and if someone hopes to gain favor by telling on another, I will punish the tale bearer and not the one who is accused."

It seemed to me also that most of the aviators I met were trying to join de Gaulle's forces. It was a current story along the coast that commanders of the air force, which had dwindled to a few squadrons, implored their men that if they *must* join the Fighting French, would they please not use their French planes to escape in? So many had disappeared that the few squadrons they had left were slowly being depleted! One officer at Maison Carré, outside of Algiers, observed this request by taking along five other pilots on his plane when he escaped to Gibraltar. In fact, the French airmen had no reason to be collaborationists. It was Germany and Italy who had not only stripped them of their planes but who broke up the air force and reduced

student flying to inadequate proportions. Vichy wobbled about and finally obtained permission of the Germans to open up glider camps and schools of airplane design for youthful amateurs.

When the Vichy government engaged in that futile campaign against the British in Syria, more than one-third of the fliers joined the British, I was told. The excuse which the government gave for their not returning was that their planes had been shot down and that they would be coming along later. That was the sort of lame excuse the newspapers printed.

German-inspired stories in the newspapers claimed that the patriots were really mercenaries attracted to Britain by wages in English pounds. It was the grossest injustice, however, to accuse these men of mercenary motives. Most of them put their entire savings in the expeditions to Gibraltar. By doing so, they cut themselves off from further gainful occupations and even risked reprisal action against their families. The expeditions were almost entirely cooperative, each paying all he could as his share. The wealthy ones paid most; the poorer ones less, and sometimes nothing but their good faith.

I knew one ranking naval officer who frequented the Golden Ball, who had resigned his commission in the navy with the frank intention of joining up with the Fighting French. He had been gunnery officer on one of the big cruisers that bombarded Genoa during that sad June of 1940 when Italy came into the war in the hope of quick,

easy spoils. By resigning officially, he received his due share of pension and bonus which would have gone to his life savings as an officer. He settled an adequate sum on his family. With the rest—all that he possessed in the world—he set about planning a departure for Gibraltar. First, he acquired a sturdy sailing canoe and was going to risk the voyage in that small, frail craft. Only a naval officer used to the solid deck of a steel ship could show such unfamiliarity with a canoe. I dissuaded him from that foolhardy trip by paddling with him about the harbor to show just how impractical it would be. He then started on a search along the coast toward Oran in the hope of finding a larger boat. While in the navy he had been charged with making a hydrographic chart of the North African coast and he knew every inlet, rock and shoal.

Hardly a day passed that some Frenchman or refugee patriot would not drop into the American Consulate in Algiers to inquire rather naively if they could find means of getting to Gibraltar or to America. "England is an ally of America," they would say, long before we were in the war, and these deluded callers would often go away disappointed and discouraged. Many of them frankly asked to be taken into the American army or navy. There they ran plumb into that cold wall of diplomatic protocol. It is probable that some of them were would-be spies, but once discovered these might have been useful as well. Sometimes I would feel genuinely sorry for them, especially the young ones. They had offered their services in apparent sincerity, only to be

turned down coldly. I think we might have been a little more kindly to these youths, even though a strict international obligation and even more severe immigration regulations prevented us from accepting their services. I could imagine the weeks of self-torment some of these young fellows must have gone through before deciding to risk all and place themselves at our disposal. And then, after so momentous a decision, it must have been a cruel disappointment in the great America, "Arsenal of Democracy," to be turned away.

Among my papers I still have various letters from ex-soldiers, legionnaires, and from several French aviators, asking me to intercede for them. I could only reply incontinently, that I would do all that I could. It was hard to listen to one of President Roosevelt's speeches against the usurpers of human freedom and then see a young soldier turned down when he asked to fight for liberty. Perhaps this is an over-sentimental view. The consular crowd will probably charge me with taking an impractical view of a highly practical matter. I have noticed that the solutions to most problems always appear in their fullest clarity after those problems have been bungled. This is especially true of diplomacy. As an American citizen, with a few sovereign rights still accruing to me by birth and early training, I always encouraged these lads who wanted to fight on the side of liberty, and especially when the issue was so clear. There is also a distinction between encouraging them and

helping them. Happily I can say that some help did actually come to certain of them from American sources which were enlightened and courageous.

Before Vichy began herding patriots into prison camps, I knew one well-known surgeon, a refugee from the North, who was one of the incorruptible champions of freedom. He was a man of considerable erudition and he held a high rank in the army medical corps. On his breast among other decorations was the Croix de Guerre from both world wars. He had saved hundreds of lives, operating under bombardments and with little thought for his own safety. This surgeon's family was marooned in the "forbidden zone" in northern France, where his library and instruments had been swept into the wreckage of his home. In Algiers, he ate regularly in a wretched ten franc *prix fixe* restaurant—comparable to a twenty-five cent meal here—so that his wife might have the best of his slender officer's pay.

During the heavy German bombardments in London he implored me to intercede at the Consulate, secretly if necessary, to enable him to get to London.

"I know they need surgeons there. I hate to look at these idle hands when so many women and children, so many brave men, lie broken and wounded in the wreckage. Oh, I could do so much good," he exclaimed, "I could save so many lives, for I work best when the wounded are calling for help and when the stretchers are coming in fast. In this war and the other one, I could always tell which one to treat

immediately, and which ones could wait a little while. That is how lives are saved. You don't take them in turn. You take first the ones who are nearest to death."

The Consulate did appreciate this patriot surgeon's request, but square against him was that specter of diplomatic propriety. Anyway, my surgeon friend was too violently hostile to Vichy. His contempt for collaborationists was inexpressible. He was removed from the Maillot Hospital in Algiers to the military hospital at Tlemcen, toward the Moroccan frontier. One day two French aviators decided to go to Morocco whence they might reach Gibraltar or London from Casablanca. They could not obtain transit visas over the Algeria-Morocco frontier. But they carried with them a card to the surgeon. On it was written only two words, "Vive la France." What happened exactly at Tlemcen, I don't know. I do know that later I received letters from both the fliers—from Casablanca. The surgeon had evidently put his frontier post to good use so that what seemed to be a setback and a reprimand enabled him to serve France all the more.

When the Fighting French and the anti-collaborationists abandoned the Café of the Golden Ball as a rendezvous, they met not at one but at several cafés and restaurants, and frequently in a certain lawyer's office. Some of them took up the habit of dropping in on me at my hotel, which did not increase my prestige with the police. As a newspaperman I was in touch with most of the sources from which they might derive help, though I had to be extremely watchful

of my conduct and even my conversations with these ardent Frenchmen. Many of the young patriots wondered why I could not act as a civilian liaison with the government and one lieutenant actually offered to put me in touch with a passport official who would provide fake visas if I could help finance their passages to Tangiers.

I used to discuss these matters with The Judge and we agreed that something ought to be done to help these men get back in the fight, since not all of them had the means to organize an expedition. It was the Norwegians, however, who most embarrassed the authorities and who seemed to manage things quite well for themselves without any outside help. The crews of several confiscated Norwegian ships were at Oran and Algiers, interned on ships tied up for lack of fuel. A large percentage of these men had slipped off quietly in big lifeboats which they lowered with well-greased gear and made their way easily to Gibraltar. One group at Oran shed ridicule on the Admiralty by escaping in a motor boat belonging to one of the big French warships. These Norwegians had got well out to sea when consternation seized the French naval command at Mers el Kebir, the naval base opposite Oran harbor. Orders were given to force the men back at all costs. A heavily armed plane sped out low over the sea and after locating them at quite some distance, threatened to sink or machine-gun the whole crew if they did not return. It was enough of a disgrace for the French navy to have a boat stolen from one of its warships but to have it serve as an escape ship for anti-

collaborationist Norwegians and to land at Gibraltar, of all places, was too much indeed. The Norwegians returned to port.

But the best Norwegian escape story came from Algiers. Despite the fact that French marine engineers had removed an essential working part of the ship's engine from a boat on which Norwegians were interned, they managed to construct the missing part themselves and prepare a getaway. The ship was moored in the industrial harbor which was not locked by a barrier. Except for an accident to a hawser, they would have slipped out to sea one dark, misty night. The port police were warned and the men were caught. It would have surprised the collaborationists to learn that a whole ship had been stolen from them. In fact, the skipper of that ship told me that it was entirely bare of lifeboats, since, one by one, the men had escaped in them in small parties. All the remaining Norwegians were later interned on the *Ville d'Oran*, a modern Mediterranean liner which had taken part in the Anglo-French landing on Narvik. It was tied up in Algiers for lack of fuel oil. It was much easier for regular seamen to escape than for civilians, since the seamen had access to the industrial port, while civilians could not enter.

There were many stories told of escape parties and their adventures. One morning an obviously unskilled but hopeful navigator was arrested as he was preparing to shove off just beyond Franco's bathing beach. This fellow was going to attempt the trip in an ordinary rowboat with a tiny sail.

He had a fair supply of fresh water, a big case of canned foods, and, strangely enough, one entire boiled ham. He was arranging these stores in the stern when the police surprised and arrested him. In a few minutes he would have gotten out to sea and, without doubt, gone to certain disaster. The escapade was so absurd that the man was cautioned but not arrested.

The French naval lieutenant whom I had met at the Golden Ball—the one who had resigned his commission and first bought a canoe—caused me some slight difficulties with the authorities when he finally made his getaway. After a long search about Oran, he had acquired a boat big enough to carry a party of nine, and after a stormy and difficult voyage, they all arrived at Gibraltar. But long before his departure I had given him the name of a member of the House of Lords whom I thought might help him in London. Suddenly I received a telegram from the lieutenant which must have put me definitely on the Vichy government's blacklist. The telegram was the only one I had ever received in Algiers which did not bear the stamp of the censor with his number. I presume the postal authorities and the police fondly hoped I would suspect the telegram had not been read and might try to answer it. The telegram was without a date line so it would have been difficult to answer, although there was no doubt it came from Gibraltar. It was written in English as follows: "Good news. Expect to see Lord H. very soon." The telegram was signed Johnny Smith.

Regardless of what the censorship or the police thought,

I knew from the telegram that Johnny Smith, alias Naval Lieutenant X, had evidently arrived at Gibraltar and he wanted to let me know. In fact, in sending me such a telegram, there were few officials in Algiers who didn't also know that "Johnny" had arrived.

Chapter Seventeen

The Fatal Kiss of Adolf

THE blessings of the Nazi New Order for Europe were not long in arriving at French North Africa. In the autumn of 1941 the estimated fourteen million population, composed of Arabs, Jews and Europeans, were already without many of the normal comforts of life. Before the winter of 1942 had passed, the majority of the people were not getting enough to eat, and before spring there were starvation conditions in many places. Typhus had broken out over a large area and was raging among the natives.

This land of smiling abundance was being looted and robbed of every edible product to feed the German and Italian armies fighting in Libya and to replenish the German Moloch in Europe. Hitler graciously allowed Algeria a little tripe, some bony lamb, chickens' feet, some little birds called *grive*, and an assortment of pigs' feet. We assumed that the German army eschewed those delicacies. In the protectorates of Morocco and Tunisia, the food was more plentiful, because the Axis preferred to retain the good will of the Moslem leaders on whom they had been

exercising a penetrating propaganda. Algeria, being a department of France, and having no Bey or Sultan on the spot, was treated with the same contemptuous scorn which the Germans meted out to the French in Europe.

The Vichy government sat quietly by and with gestures and decrees of fervent admiration, paved the way for the starvation of their own people and the colonies. The colonists who in the main were rich, well provided for, and remote from the law, showed their usual apathy toward everything but making money. They made millions of francs and were deluded into believing they were wealthy, and so they were, but in practically worthless francs. The Vichy-appointed officials in North Africa, most of whom were staunch collaborationists, could see no harm in starvation and typhus.

When the long lines began to appear in front of the food shops, the newspapers hit upon a brilliant idea. You were not allowed to say that these crowds of waiting, patient and hungry people were standing in line; they were "waiting in turn." That seemed so much nicer. It is true that there was much food in the deep south toward the desert approaches, but fewer people were there. Wherever there was transport there was no food, for the trucks and railways would carry it off to waiting ships or convoys. In the big centers of population such as Algiers, Oran, Philippeville, Bone and Constantine, which are served by railroads, the food was hauled out eastward to Tunisia where it went down through Gabes into Tripolitania. Going westward it followed the

usual route to Oran where it was loaded on boats for Marseilles and Germany.

When I left Algiers in the summer of 1942, it was bare of almost everything and what was left was available only with ration cards. There were plenty of felt hats, I noticed, and much filigree work by the natives and some fine pottery from Nabeul in Tunisia. The book stores were full of the New Order literature by Chateaubriand, Montherlant, Montigny and others. There were portraits of Marshal Petain and choice excerpts from his collaborationist speeches, but the restaurants were frequently closed for lack of provisions.

The Frenchmen who had come from France were in a fighting mood; the local anti-collaborationists were cautiously building up an underground organization, and some of the Algerian colonists were ready to listen to rebellion. But it was said that at least fifty per cent of the colonists just did not care. I believe these fifty per cent were almost as impressed by the ruthless military might of Germany as were some of the Arabs.

Regardless of the political attitude of the French colonials they had made Algeria a granary and a garden. In the short space of a few months it was hard to realize that such a violent change could occur in the food situation. I remembered my arrival in Algiers after months of near starvation in Marseilles. Sandwich bars and restaurants were bulging with everything the morning I arrived in March 1941. The little sandwich bar called La Brasserie des Arts, where I stuffed myself with food the day I arrived, was now selling

slices of bread with a marked resemblance to sawdust, covered with some mixture of ground tripe and onions. There were a few sardine sandwiches and now and then a sliced boiled egg sandwich for a change. There were no oranges. Eggs and oranges are two products which abound in Algeria. And at the Cintra Bar in the Aletti, there were no lemons for the mixed drinks. In Algeria lemons are larger and as abundant as in Sicily.

The food situation in Algiers resolved itself in this way. If you kept house, you used the black market. If you ate in restaurants you had all the thrill of the chase, going from one restaurant to another to read the menus in search of proper nourishment. The administration divided the restaurants into categories and the prices of the meals were fixed by prefectural order. The first-class restaurants were given a maximum thirty-eight-franc meal, exclusive of wine, which at legal exchange on the dollar could be compared to a table d'hôte meal of eighty cents. The meal prices then dropped down through four or five categories until they hit the ten-franc level which was the ultimate that one's stomach would take by way of gastronomic insult.

The meals themselves all followed the same plan. Two days a week there was supposed to be meat, but it consisted mainly of thin lamb. On other days the choice was confined to underfed chickens, omelettes, the little birds called *grive*, which were tragic-looking little mummies when cooked, while many restaurants resorted to the native dish called Cous Cous. One vegetable only was permitted to be served.

You rarely saw potatoes, although they grew crop after crop on Algerian farms.

I used to go with the Americans and with my friend, The Judge, to the Oasis restaurant which still cherished the illusion of other days in its red carpet and soft-shaded lamps. The maitre d'hotel was in immaculate dress, the service was impeccable, the crystal was sparkling and the silver was dazzling, but there was little food. At the Consulate they hit on the idea of canvassing the restaurants by telephone before mealtime. That way, we usually avoided tripe and pigs' feet.

Occasionally, in sheer desperation, the Americans would jump into their consular cars and take a long run into the country where feasts had been ordered in advance. The Judge frequented the Golf Club and a rare Moorish palace near Bouzarea in the suburbs where scandalously fine meals were to be had, but only the Americans or the Axis gentlemen could get there because you needed a car. Since the Axis pirates had all the food they wanted in their hotels, these outlying spots were patronized almost exclusively by the Americans. The spotters from the Prefectures had cars as well, but they were too lofty-minded to violate Vichy's dictum. They sacrificed themselves for the noble Vichy ideal and stuck to chickens' feet and tripe in the city.

Housekeepers were the best off if they used the black market. The prices were exorbitant but when you hadn't seen a piece of butter or a slice of meat for two or three weeks, the cost was not important. I dined with an Algiers

family one evening and the repast was admirable. They told me with boastful irony, that they used the same black market Arab that served the Governor General's palace. Yves Chatel was in residence at the time. I needed extra sugar, as I found the pound and a quarter monthly allowance insufficient to disguise the bad coffee. The sugar ration for Algeria was allocated only to individuals so that in restaurants or cafés the client had to bring his own sugar for coffee. We had especially designed sugar boxes similar to the snuff boxes of old in which to carry our sugar ration. I too joined up with the Arab who did black marketing for the Governor General. We were, indeed, an exclusive clientele. One day I was going past the big gate of the Governor General's palace and I saw two Arabs carrying in a huge fish, at least four feet long. I could see that the Governor General was not living on sardines.

I had had a little black market experience in Marseilles. One man who made a weekly trip to Vichy on government business (and this is not hearsay) used to return from Vichy each time with a small tub of butter which he apportioned among chosen clients. In Marseilles we learned tricks with bread rations and sometimes could fare better by pooling our other tickets.

But in Algiers the black market assumed gratifying proportions with the assistance of the native population. The inscrutable native, padding along in red fez and flowing *burnous*, has always been adept at the gentle art of smuggling. Arabs along the coast went in for black marketing

with a finesse and skill only possible in a noble race endowed with hereditary piracy.

Since I ate in restaurants I had donated my ration cards to a family with small children, but I was always on the lookout for sugar. For some weeks my chief sugar purveyor was a black-eyed, bibulous Khabile. He carried a big wicker basket and did a thriving business in those little birds known as *grive*. But underneath the birds in his basket were concealed his packages of sugar and other contraband. He was an "honest" man with a large family of children and showed me his work card on which was his photograph and his fancy Arab name. He confided in me one day that his real profession was that of stone mason. Moreover, he was respectable, indeed, because he performed his black marketing beneath the windows of the Prefect of Police, in a little café frequented by the Secret Service. When he was arrested for drunkenness (and not for black marketing) I was deeply touched.

A subsequent adventure I had in the sugar black market was with a dusky gent whom we had named Mr. Jackson. One day when I was lunching with The Judge and some serious-minded and forward-looking Vice Consuls, we were accosted by a Negro who beyond doubt was a native African, but who spoke with a familiar "southern" accent; that is, "our" South. We learned he had been about on ships and had picked up some English in America, so he was christened Mr. Jackson. Negotiations were immediately opened for sugar, coffee, olive oil and cheese. Mr. Jackson was a

good regular provider for a while, but prosperity and lucre, I'm afraid, undermined his erstwhile integrity, and he became thoroughly undependable.

Food rationing in Algiers had a different aspect from rationing in France. There it was grim and depressing. You saw the children growing daily weaker and more pale. Their voices took on accented overtones that only an older person could perhaps hear and understand. As you saw their thin legs getting thinner, you wanted to do things for them, for their disarming gentleness was so akin to helplessness. But you knew that a providential nature prevented them from knowing that their future strength and their future health and their minds were being impaired by malnutrition. That alone was enough to condemn Germany. You felt pity for the children, then hatred for the Germans and their inhuman egoism.

One day, right after the blitzkrieg had started in Holland and Belgium, I remember trying to sort into little groups unidentified children jamming the Austerlitz station in Paris. Children who hardly knew their own names were calling for their mothers in French, Dutch and Flemish. And there were frantic, tired mothers trying to find their children. The weary refugees kept crowding in, for the railroad stations were still places of sanctuary. In this tragic, wretched, sleepy throng of homeless, shattered people, I felt choked by a seething hatred of Germany—not Hitler—Germany. The picture of Germany was always before me

—the Germany that is guilty of the blood of so many innocent children.

There were other times, I need not mention here, when I saw things far worse. . . . Later in the retreat from Paris, I remember people crouching, expecting sudden death, children crying, dismayed by pervading terror, women's lips moving in swift, silent, breathless prayer. Not to hate at moments like this is ignoble. I hated and I cursed Germany which was doing this. Hitler was a vain, despicable insect, but Germany was back of all this, of this unending exodus, homelessness, demoralization, this unbelievable calamity.

I have a good memory. Because the sun was shining in Algiers, because there was a deep, fertile back country capable of furnishing some food through a black market, it did not in any way alter my feelings toward Germany. If there was food in North Africa, it was because Germany was incapable of getting it all out. If we still had wine and cigarettes and sawdust bread, it was because that womanless, viceless, shrieking biped who leads the German people had not devised ways of getting them shipped into Germany.

There was sunlight and a wholesome climate in North Africa, and if you had no clothes, you did not freeze to death as in France. We got enough in the restaurants to keep alive and with the help of the genial law-breaking Arabs, we got more. The restaurant that once served overlapping beefsteaks in big platters, was now serving lamb in something comparable to a saucer. The cosmopolitan dining

room of the Hotel Aletti was serving meals that reeked of kerosene because some harassed shipper had loaded olive oil in a tanker which had just unloaded petroleum. In Algiers we were glad even to get that kind of oil. In Algiers—where but a few years ago the produce of a continent was pyramided in markets and on docks in staggering profusion!

When I read the Vichy-controlled press condoning the food rationing and assuming that smug and hypocritical air that only an unprincipled newspaper can do so well, I could only lump Vichy and Germany together and hate them both. You eat food tainted with coal oil, you drink a black, sugarless, milkless, tasteless liquid called coffee for breakfast, you eat radishes and a thin omelette for lunch and the entrails of an animal with carrots for supper, and you go home hungry. You can drink wine to numb the edge of your hunger and can smoke cigarettes which soothe your anger and soften your contempt. For conversation you and your friends talk of nothing but food, and you laugh at the man who tells you he always puffs up his cheeks when he sees an old friend coming up the street so that the friend will recognize him in spite of his emaciated face. There were many whose identity was altered by hirsute adornment. There was a lack of shaving soap and a scarcity of razor blades, so beards and mustaches became common. Some women I had known about Algiers slowly grew thinner until I hardly recognized them. It was a startling proof of the best method of reducing. You just stop eating.

Here in “rationed” America I have two souvenirs of

Germany's food looting. One is the leather belt I wear. There are special holes (now unused) into which my belt buckle crept on two occasions, when I lived in Marseilles and when I was rationed in Algiers. The buckle is back to normal. My other souvenir is a pocketknife. Among its various gadgets is a punch which friends in France and Algiers borrowed at different times to punch new holes in their own belts.

This knife also had another use. When I would be returning home late in Algiers, walking through dark streets, I used to open the blade and carry it in my hand so the light would glint on it. The cold steel was a sharp reminder to lurking denizens who were in the habit of assaulting pedestrians, not so much to rob them of money as to divest them of their clothes. For in North Africa something to wear was even more of a problem than something to eat.

Chapter Eighteen

General Weygand Is Taken Prisoner

TWO events occurred in the last few weeks of 1941 which were destined respectively to alter the political situation of French North Africa and to shape the future order of the world.

First, General Weygand, who in late November had flown to Vichy for one of his regular conferences with Marshal Petain, was forbidden to return to Algiers and was being held under surveillance in a villa on the Riviera.

Then on December 7th, Japan crept up for its attack on Pearl Harbor while its diplomatic envoys were engaged in "peace" negotiations in Washington, plunging the United States into the second world war. In attacking the Americans as they did, the Japanese proved worthy of active partnership in the Axis.

The virtual arrest of General Weygand was hardly a surprise to anyone. Japan's odious conduct caused shock rather than astonishment. I shall never forget the morning of December 8th when I awoke to find myself at war with the universal enemy. Everywhere I went that morning there were warm handshakes to greet me.

"Now you Americans will come! You must come immediately to North Africa," all my French friends said.

The American Consulate was a hive of activity. I knew they would be flooded with messages, so I didn't go in. Instead, I walked all the way to the Hotel Aletti, stopping a dozen times to accept or refuse drinks with new and old acquaintances. There was a new feeling in the air. There was something magnetic and confident; you could feel the change in the atmosphere. People talked of nothing else but of the entry of the United States into the war. It reminded me a bit of that fateful sunny Sunday in September, 1939, in Paris, when Britain and France declared war on Germany. That time the declaration had come with a feeling of relief after days and weeks of tension and senseless argument.

To the average Frenchman in North Africa, the advent of the United States into the war meant eventual deliverance from bondage. After General Weygand's forced retirement, there had been grave speculation as to what was being prepared in Vichy. Some colonists accepted Weygand's withdrawal as a "political" expedient, and seemed to think nothing more about it. But there were many others who were apprehensive of worse things to come. The French underground in North Africa had redoubled its efforts since the November morning when the newspapers announced laconically, in a mere paragraph, that General Weygand would go into retirement. You soon learn how to read

censored newspapers. To most people that paragraph was as eloquent as a column.

I remember quite clearly the night the news first slipped through by "grapevine telegraph." I was at the Opera, attending a performance of *Carmen*. After the first act, I noticed some excitement in the foyer; in the smoking rooms groups had collected and appeared to talk together emotionally. When I learned what had happened, I left the Opera at once and wandered around town hoping to pick up any reactions or gossip. Things were still very quiet; even some of the Weygand Delegation members had not yet heard the news, though I'm sure they must have anticipated such a development.

The underlying reasons for Weygand's seizure can be clearly analyzed. America had been rolling toward war with an accelerating speed, while the Germans were so tied up in Russia that they could not protect their exposed flank in West Africa. The best thing they could do was to Vichyize French North Africa as quickly and as efficiently as possible. There could be no disguising the fact that the Weygand Delegation was playing to American entry in the war. General Weygand had been acting within his rights as a Frenchman and the high officer of a nation pledged to an armistice—but not to a peace. The Germans themselves invented the collaboration idea. Were they not the political asses that they are, they should have expected a certain amount of resistance in France. They should have decently

condoned some intelligent opposition. Having crushed France by force, they should have tried to woo her with reason and by examples of sincere mutual collaboration. But the Germans have never been rational. Under Hindenburg or Hitler, they behaved the same. They treated the French not only as a conquered people but reduced them to misery and starvation and then to actual slavery. The Germans then were surprised, even hurt, because there should be resistance in France and outright anti-Germanism in the colonies.

So they accused Weygand of secret dealings with the American State Department, and ordered his retirement. It was quite obvious he would be subsequently imprisoned.

The immediate task for the German Vichy government was to undo as much as possible of Weygand's pro-French works and send into North Africa with all speed as many collaborationist Frenchmen as possible. With sufficient Vichy officers in command at key points, especially in Morocco, an American invasion might be prevented. An intensified pro-Vichy propaganda in the press might twist the public mind away from Weygand while the infiltration of scores of hand-picked, job-seeking collaborationists would make North Africa safe for Petain—that is, safe for Germany. Meanwhile, Hitler could only gamble on an Afrika Korps victory in Egypt. Germany staked more on Marshal Rommel than the world will ever guess. If you look at events, you will see that Rommel's defeat and rout backward and west-

ward to Tripoli left Axis strategy vulnerable in Northwest Africa. The Americans certainly chose the right moment to land.

General Weygand's differences with Admiral Darlan were well known, but his loyalty to Petain was unquestioned. He remained throughout an obedient though intelligent subordinate. On one of Weygand's numerous trips to Vichy it was reported he had had a violent clash with Admiral Darlan over events in Syria. The Vichy government had issued communiqués deploring British charges that there were German warplanes stopping over on Syrian airdromes. Darlan officially denied the presence of Nazi planes. But after the British had actually destroyed German planes on the ground, and published photographic evidence, the Vichy government weakly admitted in another communiqué that there had been some few German planes in Syria "in transit." General Weygand was reported to be in furious opposition to the Vichy government's action which brought on the short and costly campaign against the British and the Free French under General Catroux. That campaign of a few weeks in May and June cost Weygand's North African command at least a third of its planes and pilots, either through casualties or through desertions to the Fighting French.

General Weygand's retirement came entirely too late to produce in any measure of success the strategic situation desired by Germany. His thirteen months' residence in North Africa had borne fruit. It can be summed up in

three phases: reorganization of the North African Armed Forces; widespread administrative reforms; and economic collaboration with the United States.

General Weygand's military activities alone should have been sufficient to alarm Germany. He conducted a tireless inspection of the land, air and naval forces from Morocco to Tunisia, visiting garrisons and desert posts by airplane and inspiring the men with his presence and his personal encouragement. He resumed air raid drills and blackout exercises and ordered the coastal batteries to engage in practice fire. In replacing Admiral Abrial as Governor General of Algeria he became the effective head of a territory five times the size of France (exclusive of Tunisia and Morocco), assuring him authority over a strategic military region extending beyond the Sahara. This move was enthusiastically acclaimed by the press. On this occasion the *Echo d'Alger* commented: "What Frenchman, in effect, does not rejoice in seeing full power concentrated in the hands of the man of whom Foch said, 'If France is in danger, send for Weygand.'"

General Weygand made frequent visits to the responsible French representatives in Tunisia and Morocco, such as Admiral Esteva and General Nogues. He countered German propaganda in Morocco by appearing with the Sultan on his spectacular visits to the remote Tafilalet region and the birthplace of the Alouite dynasty among the tribes beyond the Atlas, where he dispensed honors and decorations lavishly. On these trips Weygand arrived and left with

an impressive squadron of military planes. Under his regime, General Juin, an experienced African officer and no lover of Germany, was given the command of the land forces. General Beynet, commander of the 19th Military Region in Algiers, was sent to Wiesbaden to represent France on the main Franco-German Armistice Commission. Singularly, General Beynet was not considered an arch collaborationist. I knew from an unimpeachable source that General Beynet, shortly after his arrival in Wiesbaden, personally looked upon collaboration as an experiment already dead.

As a sort of pro-Consul in North Africa, General Weygand's administrative activities were outstanding. He immediately applied himself to the Arab situation. After recommending that Moslems be appointed to the National Council which met in Vichy, he inaugurated civil service reforms and later decreed substantial wage increases for all natives, regardless of their professions. He personally visited Arab workmen's homes and familiarized himself with the Kasbah and its life. He quickly reorganized the food supply and transport facilities as between North Africa and France in a formal economic parley. This was later developed into an economic conference at which the Vichy-German plans were formulated for absorbing as much North African food as possible for the Axis requirements. This economic reorganization had the effect, at least, of assuring a maximum transport to alleviate food rationing.

During General Weygand's administration, plans were drawn up at a hydraulic power conference to increase pro-

duction of electric power and to put vast areas under irrigation. Weygand's reforms pleased his chief, Marshal Petain, who in a special decree concentrated all North African administrative and political questions directly under Weygand and Darlan, which meant Weygand retained virtual negotiating power for North Africa. This was not far from creating a benevolent dictatorship. In many places, particularly in Orania and in Khabilia, Mussulmen formally pledged their loyalty to General Weygand, through their chosen leaders. Early in his administration, a new chief was recognized in the distant Hoggar desert where the picturesque Amenokal Ahkamouk ag Ihemma had died. The new chief of this strange chaos of purple mountains, white desert and red nomad tents was Meslar ag Amayas. It was reported that even this ancient matriarchy, where children take the names of their mothers and women themselves choose their warrior husbands, was loyally disposed toward Weygand.

In Algiers itself General Weygand reopened the gambling casino in the Hotel Aletti, bringing more revenue to the city and discouraging clandestine gambling in dives, which he said was bound to lead to crime. He also reopened the Caroubia race track, and established an annual literary prize for the best work in French by a native Arab scholar. Before he was recalled, General Weygand had opened a big cold-storage plant in the suburbs, and had also stepped up work in neglected industrial plants. He was non-committal on the government's project for the trans-Saharan railroad which

the Germans had insisted on resuming with slave labor from the Foreign Legion. Engineers were in sharp disagreement as to the methods of overcoming sandstorm hazards on this proposed line from Nemours on the Mediterranean to the Niger. The Germans were interested mainly in coal transport to the coast from the Kanadsa mines in Morocco. Most of the coal was to go to Germany. Even the locomotives that pulled the trains were forced to burn wood.

The economic collaboration with the United States took the form of the Murphy-Weygand economic agreement and it was of incalculable benefit both to the natives in the way of much needed necessities of life and to us in the way of prestige. The American occupation must have come as the logical consummation of that agreement.

But in view of all these constructive activities of Weygand, Vichy and the Germans became restive. The Germans in Algiers and Casablanca began reporting back grave dissensions from the collaborationist idea. Intrigues against Weygand were growing. Vichy decided to send General Huntziger, the minister of war, on an official mission and "tour of inspection" to North Africa. This trip, which ended in Huntziger's accidental death, caused widespread comment.

There were reports that General Huntziger was visiting North Africa solely to check up on the Weygand Delegation's activities. In fact, there can be no doubt that Huntziger made fairly accurate observations on the Weygand-Murphy set-up and on the general attitude of North Africa

toward collaboration with Germany. General Huntziger did visit the key points of the North African colonies and his 10,000-kilometer trip was given fullest publicity through the radio, cinema and newspapers.

I saw Huntziger for the last time as he rode with General Weygand in an official car to pay his respects to assistant Governor General Chatel. It was the eve of his ill-fated departure for France and Vichy. The two generals were acclaimed by the populace as they passed. I was in the little bistro near the American Consulate and The Judge was there with me along with two or three friends. I remember The Judge saying something like, "Here come the two prima donnas!" The Rue Michelet, which leads past the Consulate, up past the Governor General's palace, was lined with a cordon of colonial infantrymen starting from the center of Algiers. This must have required a full regiment at least. General Weygand and General Huntziger both sat up very straight in the car; they were not conversing. There were plenty of reasons why the two officers, who had been leading figures in the defeated French armies, might not feel entirely at ease with each other. Weygand had been Huntziger's chief in the last war; but Huntziger, as Minister of War at Vichy, was now technically Weygand's superior, although the latter seemed absorbed only by his loyalty to Marshal Petain.

The next day we had the news that General Huntziger's plane had crashed in France, due to ice formation on the wings and that the general and all the occupants had been

killed. The general's brief case, containing a detailed report written especially for Vichy on his inspection tour, was found intact near the wreckage.

In due time it was laid before the Marshal. Gossipers circulated two stories. One was that Huntziger had been slated to replace General Weygand, who had become too pro-American. The other story was that Huntziger had faithfully revealed the true state of mind of the North African colonies, that is, their growing antipathy to collaboration. Perhaps Huntziger indicated that General Weygand was partially responsible for the anti-Axis feeling which prevailed. None of this has been confirmed.

When the news films were shown in Algiers of the entire Huntziger episode, including views of his tour of North Africa, the debris of the airplane crash and the funeral ceremonies at Vichy, the audience showed little enthusiasm for Huntziger. On the other hand, virtual ovations sounded out each time General Weygand appeared on the screen. It was this same film which also showed the Germans in Vichy, and which had been cut to prevent demonstrations on the part of theater audiences against the Germans. In deleting the views of the Germans, the censors also deleted views of General Weygand.

By November of 1941, there was no doubt as to General Weygand's growing popularity in North Africa, particularly in Algiers. He and his delegation were observing with meticulous attention all the proprieties of the situation. Evidently that was not enough for the Germans. They

wanted Weygand recalled. Marshal Petain could not save him. Admiral Darlan obviously was concerned only with navy officers, and he considered that it was the French army that had lost the war. Darlan took the attitude that the navy had not been beaten; so Weygand, a mere opposition army officer, was sacrificed.

That General Weygand had planned a long residence in Algiers was obvious in the thorough manner in which he had furnished a home. He had taken a splendid villa in the hills which look over Algiers at El Biar and had added some improvements, both to the house and the garden. I knew a Syrian antique dealer who told me how much time and money Weygand had spent in furnishing this house. He had purchased handsome rugs, rare furniture and pictures, and gardeners had made it a paradise of flowers. It was from this residence that General Weygand left in November, to go to Vichy. And it was certain that he would not return to it for a long time, if ever.

It was regrettable that Petain's pro-Consul in Africa did not escape from France, as General Giraud did. After the historic invasion of North Africa, General Weygand was reported to have been "set free" by Petain to do as he chose, whatever he considered was best for France. Weygand would certainly have come to North Africa, if only to regain his beautiful villa—to say nothing of helping to lead France back to victory. But a watchful Gestapo was soon on his trail. From the moment he left his guarded Riviera villa, the Germans followed him. In a car, on a road going out of

Vichy, General Weygand was arrested by the Nazis. Whatever plans he had were useless. With other distinguished Frenchmen, General Weygand was taken to the fortress of Koenigsberg, and there imprisoned.

Long after General Weygand's arrest, Germany's supercilious Foreign Minister, Herr von Ribbentrop, excused his country's conduct on grounds that Weygand had "received special instructions from President Roosevelt to collaborate with the Allies." This lame excuse appeared in a United Press dispatch from Berne published on April 8, 1943, in the *New York Times*. The dispatch quoted a letter sent by von Ribbentrop to Marshal Petain in which the Foreign Minister said that General Weygand had "started negotiations with African Consul Murphy (Robert Murphy, American diplomatic representative) in a secret meeting on July 17, 1941." The letter goes on to say that "Murphy forwarded to Weygand Roosevelt's message, which was received by Weygand with great satisfaction, after which he gave a promise not to divulge its contents." The letter continues, "During the meeting (with Murphy) Weygand expressed hope for a German defeat, manifesting his personal will to collaborate in that defeat with all his means."

The von Ribbentrop letter also dealt with the case of General Giraud, charging him with "breaking his promise" and escaping after the Germans had taken him prisoner. It said he had broken his promise to both Marshal Petain and Herr von Ribbentrop and asserted the Nazis had obtained evidence that General Weygand was about to do likewise.

This letter sounds like a sample handout from von Ribbentrop's "ever-ready" document drawer. The so-called secret meetings between Weygand and Murphy concluded their initial phase about July 9th, when it was agreed the French cargo ship, *Ile de Re*, would inaugurate the exchange of goods by leaving Algiers for the United States with a load of cork. This cross-Atlantic economic exchange was concluded in full agreement with the Germans, the Italians and the British. The early negotiations were conducted privately and with normal secrecy until German approval was assured. There is some reason, however, for the German Foreign Minister's bad humor since the Axis was genuinely out-smarted by the fact that "made in America" articles soon were pouring into North Africa, their labels plainly visible to all.

On the other hand, I can't understand why champagne-salesman Ribbentrop should be surprised at General Weygand's intention to escape France, or that General Giraud escaped from a German prison, breaking his promises both to Petain and Ribbentrop. Nothing could be more farcical than a Nazi Foreign Minister squawking because someone else had broken a promise to him!

During the months that General Weygand was in North Africa he must have realized the risks he was running. Weygand was conducting psychological warfare. He had no arms so he waged war with ideas, that slow, sure, penetrating attack which at last produces an army and a people ready to fight.

Whether General Weygand gambled on time or the United States intervention does not alter the fact that he must have known how desperate his gamble was, as he carried on in that little cabinet-like office of his in that gem of a Winter Palace. He answered every call to fly to Vichy, knowing probably that on one of those trips he would meet his ancient enemy face to face. It happened in November, a year before the United States could move into Africa. Weygand could never have lasted in Algiers another year. He was first a victim of his loyalty to Petain, for he could have gone into hiding. He was sacrificed by Darlan, for he was not a naval officer and, moreover, he did not believe the world began and ended in the French fleet. He was freed at length by the poor old Marshal, but that shifty, shady, sinister politician Laval abandoned him to the Germans. Like Darlan, Laval could have saved him, but General Weygand was not the man either to seek or to accept such an ignominious end. His was at least an honorable fate; he is now a prisoner in a war of revenge waged by a nation he once helped fight to an abject, unconditional and complete surrender.

Chapter Nineteen

My Rooms Are Searched

WITH the United States now fighting in the war against the Axis, we Americans in Algiers found ourselves in a unique position. We were living in the territory of a France which was pledged to collaborate with Germany while our government was well into a war pledged to crush Germany along with its satellites.

The Germans could not prevent us from having an embassy functioning in neutral Vichy and a full array of Consulates in North Africa, so they used every pretext to turn collaborationist France against us. On the other hand, we lost no time or opportunity in repaying the compliment. Since the position of France was technically that of a neutral, we were required to observe the laws of the land, conform to diplomatic usage and not violate the secular traditions of hospitality.

But there was another situation which we were also bound to respect. As I have repeatedly explained, there was "another France" in North Africa, composed of thousands of French patriots who considered themselves still at war with Germany, and now those patriots were on our side,

and ready to do anything. And as American war activities increased, as the evidences of our all-out preparations became apparent, the French patriots began to embarrass us with their attentions. Among them were many hotheads, zealots, exiles and sworn enemies of Vichy. Some of them even got out of patience with our official rectitude and our attempt to maintain a show of neutrality.

As United Press correspondent, still tinkering with news dispatches, I was in a good position to prowl about in odd corners and talk to all sorts of strange people in all sorts of places. Our consular staff was busy now with checking on the distribution of the American goods shipped to North Africa under the Murphy-Weygand agreement, to see that none of it fell into German or Italian hands. And I presume that if, by any chance, they stumbled on a piece of military information, they did not hesitate to pass it along.

Those suspicious Germans thought it was the other way around—that our vice-consuls were specializing in military information and only occasionally concerning themselves with the workings of the economic accord. The repartition of the duties of these fine gentlemen, the vice-consuls, and how they spent their time, is a subject on which I need not expatiate. They were Americans, that's all. Moreover, Mr. Murphy had quite emphatically warned us to behave properly and not to get into trouble with the administration.

So we began a little war all of our own, a little war of wits and of artifice which grew more absorbing and more exciting as time went on. The Germans were definitely out

to get us, if they could, to have us arrested or expelled. The French police and the Vichy administration, so far, was being fair with us, realizing we were at war with Germany, and would act against us only under pressure or in view of some flagrant misconduct. But as a newspaperman, all these fine shadings of attitude rather bored me. A secret agent has his work laid out and he moves cautiously within his stipulated sphere, but a journalist is more gregarious. He has to be excused.

We still kept to our morning meetings in the little bistro, and now that the gambling casino had reopened in the Aletti, these breakfast meetings were sometimes extensions of earlier encounters about the roulette wheels. The Judge was working hard at his government job and was frequently up and down the coast on little missions which he described as of "no importance." Many consular gentlemen came and went, from Tunis to Casablanca, and this evidently worried the Germans, for their visits to that "milliner's shop" across the street from our bistro became more frequent. French patriots began to frequent the bistro as they had done at the café of the Golden Ball, so it became harder and harder to maintain the immaculate neutrality which we may have tried to observe.

One evening, up in the restaurant of the Casino, where on certain days you could get a reasonably good meal, The Judge said to me, "We are now deep in psychological warfare." He was inclined to be sarcastic. I believe that since he was really from what one might call the Old School, he was

for more direct action. We discussed this new psychological warfare and as he squinted at his wine glass he added, "This psychological stuff reminds me of a war between pansies." But he was not the kind to shirk orders; psychological warfare must go on.

The war between the Vichy and pro-French factions in Algiers was growing hot. Vichy was running in nothing but pure collaborationists, and routing most of them on to Morocco and Tunisia. The North African press was well in the hands of the Vichyites. The crowds in the gaming rooms of the Casino formed a perfect cross-section of factional strife, subversive warfare, counter-espionage and underground. Frequently The Judge would be playing roulette on one side of the table, the Gestapo chief would be gambling opposite him, a British agent playing stolidly near the croupier, with an assortment of lesser fauna scattered about. And don't think we were without the E. Phillips Oppenheim atmosphere of pretty women, international adventuresses and handsome male spendthrifts. They were all there, with even an added dash of color in the shape of one or two scandalously rich native Bachages in gorgeous attire who played only with those big, brown thousand-franc notes of the Bank of Algeria.

One of the baccarat tables was always a mystery to me, and even with the help of the wily Judge, who certainly knew his gaming rooms, I could never figure it out. There was quite a group of European Jewish refugees in Algiers, early arrivals in the rush from the Huns. Most of the Jews

I knew were very much on our side. Some of the men had been in the Foreign Legion. But in the Casino there was a combination, rather unusual, of a Hungarian Jew and his pretty wife, who were inveterate gamblers, and a tall, youngish member of the German Armistice Commission, a very grand Aryan. This trio I met frequently about Algiers. One day I saw a couple who attracted my attention near the American Consulate. The man was dressed in sandals, shorts, a sports shirt and big blue sun glasses. The girl wore a local type of frock, a kind of basket hat and also big dark glasses. They looked so un-Algerian that I stared at them—and then recognized the Hungarian Jewess and the Nazi of the Casino. Naturally the man carried a camera; probably they were on a little cultural mission in the city.

That same baccarat table harbored a neat collection of eminently useful citizens. There was an Italian lothario, who, as a "French businessman," used to give intellectual gatherings in his apartment. There was a Rumanian woman who claimed at least four other nationalities and as many passports, and was hoping to become an American citizen—a real break for the U.S.A. There was a French woman lawyer whom they called "Miss," reported to be a stooge for Vichy. And there was a Syrian Catholic (so he claimed) who was always going back and forth between Algiers and Paris. He even offered to go to my old hotel in Paris and to bring me my clothes and typewriter, but I thought it best not to become too involved with this odd traveler.

The Casino gaming rooms attracted many of the habitués

of the Cintra bar downstairs and certainly all the secret service gentry. It was at the Casino one evening that I met a new American whom The Judge told me was in "communications." He called him Red. This man had come from Lisbon and was en route to Tunis. We chatted over coffee and The Judge told Red, rather casually, that I might be useful to him. Red then asked me if I knew Algiers. I told him I had wandered over nearly every inch of it.

"Then come along with me," he said. "I've got to pick up a bundle in the car."

Outside the Aletti on the street facing the harbor, there were three American cars, two of which I recognized. "Whose car is that?" Red asked, pointing to the third automobile. It looked to me like one belonging to the German Commission and I told him so. We jumped into his car and were immediately joined by a third American whom I knew as Andy. Andy took the wheel; it was he who acted as guide for this strange night run, which became more mysterious as time went on.

Red seemed very nervous. As the third member of our party, I sat in the back seat. Suddenly Red turned and asked me if I had a gun. I replied in the negative. Andy at the wheel came to my rescue explaining that newspapermen didn't carry guns. Somehow I felt a little apprehensive of this "bundle" business, but now I was in for it, so I stuck on.

In a few moments another one of our American group in Algiers, we'll call him Barton, came from somewhere out of the partial blackout and signaled to us. Barton jumped

into the second car and both started off up the sea promenade toward Mustapha. I noticed that the third car was also trailing by this time, and I felt sure it was the German Commission. Now I knew there was adventure in the air. I heard Red say, "We want to lose Barton gradually, because they'll follow him. Is that right?"

"Okay," came the reply from Andy. We started out on a strange tour of dark avenues, by-streets and gardens, until we seemed to be alone. Both Red and Andy kept peering into the darkness in all directions. Suddenly the car drew up before a circular plot, in the center of which stood a single palm tree. A youngish man, hatless and casual looking, crossed to our car from the dark street. He gave us a number—loud enough for me to hear. "They'll be waiting," he said in French. Then the man disappeared.

We plunged on straight down a dark street, trying to pick out the house numbers. Andy stopped the car suddenly. "Here it is," he said. I noticed two men standing in a doorway with a suitcase. We all shook hands in the French fashion and wasted what seemed to me an incredible amount of time for such a strangely hurried mission. They put the suitcase in the back with me. We were off again, this time riding easily along toward more lighted streets and in no apparent hurry; we now had our "bundle." I settled the suitcase toward the center of the car, then realized why two men had been needed to handle it. It was as heavy as iron. Now it dawned on me that it must be a sending set.

"Where are you going to take this little bundle?" I asked the boys in the front seat.

"We're *not* taking it to the German Consulate," Andy informed me.

The third car must have followed Barton, for we did not see it again that night. I learned later what the plan was. If the third car, which was actually a German Commission car, had followed us, we were going to lead them off while Barton would then be left alone to pick up the "bundle." We also heard later that Barton had led the Germans a weary chase almost to Maison Carree and back. He stopped at a road turn in Upper Mustapha. The Germans were cruising not far behind but turned off a side road. Barton heard a shot fired in the dark, so he moved quickly on to his hotel. There were no marks on the car, but he was sure the shot came from the occupants of the other automobile—perhaps some German "humor."

This little experience with the sending set, which I had fallen upon quite accidentally, is indicative of many activities going on in open warfare, or in the underground, which the public may regard as some simple or even casual performance. In fact, moving a sending set is a bit of dangerous business, not so much for the personal hazard as for the risk of being caught by the police or the enemy. Their location must be frequently changed since the enemy's direction finders can soon locate their general position, then scale it down to the town, then the neighborhood, then the block, and finally the actual house.

I knew a British officer who lived in a populous quarter near Algiers who with extraordinary patience used to set up a post and break it down and hide it every night, fearing a possible search. He claimed that was easier than changing the location, although the worry was making him a nervous wreck. On the other hand, you know the enemy, or the fifth column, is doing the same thing, and certainly right in our midst. Because of this, I never had any qualms about playing the enemy's own game. At least, it was gratifying in Algiers to know that despite talk of our unpreparedness, we were not asleep. The American people's interests were not being neglected, as many were inclined to think.

Life in Algiers was certainly growing more exciting as each day passed. I knew that my telephone calls were being tapped, so that the Prefecture should have the pleasure of knowing where and when and with whom I made appointments for tea; that is, while tea was still to be had. The French patriots rejected politely or otherwise by our Consulate continued calling on me at my hotel because I was an American correspondent. And I met some wonderful types.

Some were looking for information and, I was certain, trying to catch me up in some deviltry. But many were, indeed, anxious to serve. I could easily have set up a detective bureau with all this talent. I knew something would happen before long. One Frenchman I had known in Paris warned me that he was going to do everything he could to help the Americans and if anything happened to him, would I please see that his wife was provided for, if possible. An-

other one was so anxious to do anything for the Consulate, or for our government, that he offered to sign a document before witnesses declaring he would hold no claim against the United States if he were executed. It was hard for me to explain to these fellows that I was just a plain newspaperman, and in no position to give them the opportunity they desired.

As the only correspondent, I became a kind of repository for documents and letters and all kinds of information, good and bad, fact and rumor. My French journalist colleagues in the little restaurants had long since ceased to observe any discretion when I joined them. They told me censorship stories and the Vichy censorship consignees on how to play the news and they were bursting with stories of the late General Huntziger, of Weygand, Darlan, Chatel, Laval and Petain. I used to slip much of this stuff to The Judge and to members of the Consulate. Often I left the Consulate feeling that I had been impertinent and that they thought I was playing the role of amateur detective. I never stopped warning the American crowd of the German agents in Morocco. The British whom I knew in Algiers were in agreement with me on this, but the Americans were always inclined to minimize the Moroccan danger. I doubted that there were "thousands" of German agents in Morocco, but there was a big German Commission at Anfa, and at Casablanca the Nazi propagandists worked continuously on the French as well as the Arabs. At the time of our November landing, Morocco was, in fact, our weak spot.

Early in January I had further warnings that I was on a list of those to be arrested. The so-called Viennese-American informer who covered the German Commission tipped me off that things were getting serious, and that the Germans were complaining every day about the activities of the American vice-consuls in North Africa. An Alsatian, connected with the "suppressed" Deuxieme Bureau, warned me to be careful. I even examined my place for a microphone and gave strict orders to the hotel not to let people come up to my rooms. I went through my books and papers and threw away much of the rubbish a newspaperman collects. Recently Saadi, my old valet de chambre, had been replaced by a much smoother article called Rachid. He talked too much and had a wandering eye.

The Vichy police had been on the rampage about two weeks, investigating Communists, Jews, anti-collaborationists, and subversive agents of all kinds. As an American newspaperman, I knew I could soon expect a visit.

It came one morning a little before eight o'clock, the usual hour for such calls. There was a sinister knock at my door. Perhaps it was the quiet shuffling of three pairs of feet, or simply the ominous way they always knock; anyway, I could sense trouble. I was dressed in pajamas. As I went to the door, I pondered whether it was a warrant for arrest or for a search. It was the first time it had ever happened to me and I wanted to do the thing nicely, with the polite unconcern of the honest man. I opened the door and there they were, three of them. One I recognized vaguely from

somewhere; the other two were younger and unimpressive. The older one, who turned out to be a chief in the foreigners' bureau of the departmental Prefecture, told me he had an order to search my premises.

They all seemed well disposed at first and surprised that I had received them like friends. I warned them they would find a lot of nameless junk in my effects, that newspapermen are sometimes careless and lazy and let papers and documents pile up, but I volunteered to help them clear up any mysteries they should fall upon. They set to work on three fronts. One went to my books and furniture, one attacked my clothes, and the third went after my papers, carbon copies of my stories to the United Press, notebooks, manuscripts, cards, photographs and folders.

The chief immediately was fascinated by some volumes of English poetry on my night table. My catholic taste in literature somewhat baffled him, since my library skipped capriciously up and down between a French-Arabic dictionary, the Koran in English, and some popular detective stories in German. The other one, I suspect, was a little disappointed at the unpretentious claims of my sartorial display. They questioned me concerning some reputedly well-known Communists in Algiers and I had to admit that I did not know them. Looking through my collection of visiting cards proved a rich find. I had everything from the names of French Staff Officers down to Jewish apothecary clerks, lawyers, postal employees, journalists, waiters,

vice-consuls, aviators, Casino gamblers, and even collaborators. They read everything from canceled autobus tickets to old laundry lists, and pretended to read all my English letters which I knew they did not understand. One letter, from an English-speaking Frenchman who had escaped to Casablanca, had foolishly described in English how he got over the Moroccan frontier. They missed its meaning, fortunately, although, at the end, the writer concluded, "Well, so long, Colonel," signing with his monogram.

"So, you are a Colonel!" the detective exclaimed accusingly. I explained that it was mere bantering. He was not convinced. They turned drawers inside out and dumped papers on the floor. Coming upon many refugee Jewish names, they asked me, "Why is it that you know so many people from the Bab el Oued?" (This is the Jewish quarter of Algiers.)

"If you continue," I explained, "you will find names from all over Algiers." But this detective, a young one and evidently a neophyte, was bent on finding something. The others were not so zealous. He found the visiting card of General Weygand's attorney, then the card of the Count de Rose, and quite stupidly he asked me if I knew them and how I had met them. The chief turned and answered for me in a gruff, one-syllable murmur which obviously meant for him to get on with his work. Then the chief found something which interested him, a little slip of paper with a row of initials on it, and opposite the initials a number.

"This is undoubtedly a code," he exclaimed, and offered it to me for explanation. It was a simple thing to be so incriminating. I had bought a collection of four picture post cards of Algiers and intended sending them all to a dozen or so friends in America. I had put down the initials of the friends and opposite their initials the numbers 1 to 4, indicating which of the four types of cards I would mail them. However, I found the mails were so bad that I did not send the cards after all, and only the paper remained. The chief accepted this explanation, but he looked as if I had tricked him. They examined my pocket book and found a normal amount of money in it, and searched the hall and bathroom up and down. For more than two hours they quizzed me about my work, my journalist friends, my Spanish friends, my German teacher, my family and my future plans.

The bright young man tried some of the pulp-detective story tricks by asking me sudden questions, then by asking me further details on questions he had assumed I had already answered, but he got nowhere. His chief, I think, was amused. All this time the third man, who seemed to be a furniture expert, just prowled around and punched pillows and chairs and looked under rugs, though he was not so dumb, for he looked into the water of the vase where I kept flowers. I had had in truth something to hide but it was not in the water—although I have been told this is a good place to hide things.

The bright young man so tireless in his efforts then took several examples of the writing of my typewriter, as if I

would be fool enough to use a machine for anything subversive. Suddenly, they made a real discovery. This neophyte came upon a sheet of paper with a strange drawing in red crayon which might have been the plan of the Algiers fortifications or how to find your way from the Admiralty to the Kasbah or vice versa. An immediate explanation of this! they demanded. It was, indeed, from a very subversive person. I explained that Consul General Cole, who lived far up in the gardens of El Biar, had invited me to dinner and that the red diagram was the route to follow from my hotel. They checked and were satisfied. After that I also told them that Consul General Cole wanted me to come early to visit his garden to see what he called his "Hitler Plant." This was a semi-tropical blue lily which had red pimples and a sort of mustache, all of which emitted the most repulsive odor I or any of Cole's guests had ever experienced. That was why they called it the Hitler Plant.

The chief detective and the furniture expert laughed at this, but the bright young man retained his gravity. He was busy going through an inside coat pocket where at last he actually found something. I had been carrying a small collection of documents distributed by the Algiers underground and which I had intended leaving at the Consulate for safekeeping. They consisted of the letter of resignation of General de Laurencie to Marshal Petain. De Laurencie had represented the Vichy government in Paris and resigned after he had arrested Pierre Laval, on Petain's orders. His letter was distributed secretly to all French patriots be-

cause the government had denied its very existence. There was also the letter of resignation of Petain's judicial counselor, Maitre Basdevant, one of France's foremost jurists. This letter was a withering denunciation of Vichy's capitulation to Germany. And besides these, there was a French translation of Sumner Welles' statement dealing with Admiral Darlan's concessions to the Japanese in Indo-China in which Welles asserted the government of the United States could no longer depend on the word of France. The last of the documents in the pile was a French underground hand-out about Hitler's "forced motherhood" for Alsatian girls and other Nazi activities in the Rhine provinces looted from France.

This sheaf of documents, I explained, was the kind of material that every journalist had the right to collect. They were valid historic papers. So long as I did not distribute them, or so long as they did not catch me distributing them, there could be no suspicion against me. I pointed out that they had, intentionally or otherwise, overlooked some copies of Jean Luchaire's Paris newspaper, *Nouveaux Temps*, which was a collaborationist daily and mouthpiece of Abetz, and lots of other pro-Vichy material. The bright young man immediately compared my typewriter specimens with the typing of the documents and he was satisfied that they had not been copied on my machine. Nevertheless, they tried in every way to learn if I was distributing the documents and if not whence I had received them. So we had a slight battle

of wits as to the source of the papers. We both won. I insisted I found such things in my hotel letter box from time to time.

There was, of course, the usual *proces verbal*, drawn up with that bewildering French legal verbiage, which I signed, admitting possession of the documents. At two o'clock that afternoon I was called to the Prefecture and this time confronted by the chief of the trio of detectives who had searched my premises. He had a pair of steady dark eyes; I looked just as steadily at him, and declared I could not tell him where the documents came from, that I might guess but that it would be highly unfair and unjust, and, moreover, I usually found such things in my letter box. He gave up trying, shook hands mechanically and we parted on terms of mutual respect. I heard no more of that visitation, although about two months later I was served with a writ of expulsion.

Several times after that I met the chief, or his subordinates, including the bright young man, and they were both courteous and friendly, and always shook hands warmly. But I can vouch that a search of this kind is an unpleasant experience, especially when you have something to hide. I am convinced that a paper can remain concealed only by the best of luck, for those fellows usually do a thorough job.

I had secreted a document some days before which they did not find. There was a threatened match shortage, as everybody knew in Algiers, so I had a small hoard of about

eight ordinary boxes of safety matches. They were on a shelf in my wardrobe. The detectives were not surprised to see the match boxes, although they looked at the top box and finding it full, put it back. But in a box toward the center, underneath a layer of matches, I had a tightly folded, closely typewritten, double sheet of pink paper, a French translation of one of the ordinances by which the Germans grabbed control of French corporations. These were always posted in France, as they were issued, in French and in German, but the population little understood their significance, and they were not published or circulated outside the occupied zone. This document was certainly no secret, since it had been posted publicly, but had the Algiers police found it, they could have traced the sheets to the typewriter that printed them and a very prominent, well-placed official, working for the cause of liberation, would have been caught and probably arrested or sent southward into exile. And worse than that, his good work would have been stopped.

At the Prefecture they had kept my documents, except the Sumner Welles statement, which they graciously handed back to me. So I lost no time in putting the Welles statement and the German ordinance in safekeeping. I made a full report of this interesting visit for the Consulate, and later received overwhelming felicitations from French friends. In those days any encounter with the Vichy police was regarded as a mark of distinction, whatever the outcome. A search like mine called for extensive entertainment and a vote of confidence.

The Judge told me over drinks in that unholy Cintra Bar, that he was surprised this search had not happened before. "It won't matter anyway," he said quietly, amid the noise and clatter of that smoke-filled den of espionage. "Try and wait around, if you can. Intervention plans are now on in full flower."

Chapter Twenty

Expelled from French Territory

IMMEDIATELY after my premises were searched, the police honored quite a few others with similar morning calls. In fact, the pro-French colony in Algiers, and even in other centers along the coast, hurriedly began removing all scraps of paper, letters, documents and printing impedimenta which might tie them up with anything hinting at subversive activities.

The emphasis in these searches was always on "Communism." Naturally, such searches gave the police the opportunity they wanted to peer at other angles of peoples' private lives and to report back to the German and Italian Commissions. The anti-red wave came obviously from Berlin via France, and it went to childish lengths to link up anti-Vichy sentiments with Moscow. In my case, nothing could have been more absurd; I was certainly anything but a Communist. They might as well have accused me of being a Nazi, for I still can't see much difference between the two. They have both murdered the kind of human liberty I believe in—that kind of liberty bequeathed to us by men like Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln.

Although I kept on working for the United Press, I realized that the surveillance was getting more concentrated and that little news was getting through to New York. Some of my colleagues had been warned to keep away from me; one of my best friends, Marcel Mariani, a French patriot of an old Corsican family, had been banished to a colonial village toward the South. He had been a telegraphic editor of the *Depêche Algerienne*, but by profession he was an ethnologist. He had just published an excellent book on the South Seas entitled "Atolls." Mariani was one of those violently pro-American Frenchmen who could not and would not conceal his contempt for collaborationists. He was a confirmed liberal and had friends in left groups suspected of red tendencies. His boss had warned him that I was a plain, ordinary spy, and to keep away from me. An official in the Prefecture also warned that he should have had better sense than to hang around with one whom he described as "that Jew Dashiell."

"Mike" Mariani went off into exile when a prefectoral order stipulated he could no longer work as a journalist in Algiers. Sadly, he took up his residence in a little hotel in a remote agricultural community. Fortunately, the region had been settled by peasants from France, and they shared a French peasant's aversion to the Germans. Before many days, Mike was given a horse for exercise and rides about the country, although he was supposed to remain in a restricted area. He was served food by these sympathetic peasants such as rationed Algiers had not known for months.

These real old French treated him as one of their own, and none was kinder to him than the Prefect of the village. The charges against Mariani were finally found to be baseless and after a few weeks he returned to Algiers in glowing health. But the Prefect of Algiers would not rescind his order. Mike went to Tunis, to work as a journalist. After the American landing, I received a letter from Mariani from North Africa. He was working in Casablanca, and he wrote, "I still can't believe it. I still almost faint with happiness at the very sight of an American or British uniform."

It was late in February of 1942 that I received some bad news. Because of so many vital developments in the Pacific area and the impossibility of getting news out of French North Africa, the United Press had decided to close out its bureau in Algiers. So in March I was again without visible means of support. Like an actor out of a job, I was "at liberty."

I cabled various American newspapers and agencies, but to borrow a British phrase, they took a dim view of correspondence from North Africa because of the censorship, and not without reason. My situation more than ever intrigued the German snoopers in Algiers, and old Scarface and his gang at the German Commission began prodding the Prefecture to keep an eye on my activities. I learned through The Judge, some days later, that the poor overworked postal employee assigned to listen to my telephone at the Djemila Palace had been ordered to cut me off his list. He had told The Judge, "Your friend Dashiell is liquidated. That's one

telephone less I have to listen to." I knew what that meant.

Returning home a few nights later, I found a harmless-looking yellow envelope on my writing table, addressed to me in purple ink. It had the outward appearance of a gas bill or a notice of insufficient postage for a parcel. It happened to be a printed form from the Prefect of Police, with only my name and the dates filled in with ink. The printed formula invited me to come to the Prefecture, *Bureau des Passeports*, tomorrow on a matter which was of interest to me.

In France you never know just what a summons like that may mean. Usually it concerns your identity papers. But this little slip had such an innocent and harmless look that I was suspicious. I slept well and before noon the next day went off rather wearily to the Prefecture. I had a glass of pink wine to fortify my soul in the café where I used to meet my black market, and went directly across the street into that formidable building and into the *Bureau des Passeports*.

I was courteously received and admitted into a small cabinet. Here I noticed a Rumanian lady, the same woman who used to gamble at my "mystery" baccarat table in the Casino. She was signing an order of expulsion. An elderly Frenchman at the desk informed her that her traveling papers would be ready in thirty-six hours. She grunted something inaudible, seemed quite bored and swept out, leaving only her heavy perfume behind. The elderly Frenchman gazed my way, asking my name. He looked at me benignly, then reached for a sheaf of four printed sheets.

"I regret very much to have to do this," he said, "but you are expelled from French territory." He hesitated a moment, adding, "But you have a month to go." There was a note of kindness in his voice. He continued, "You should go to your Consulate. Go and tell them." Obviously he was implying that they might fix matters up so that I could stay. Then he resumed a professional tone, "If you do leave, come back here before the month is up and we will see that your passport is stamped for traveling through Morocco. Will you please sign these sheets at the bottom?"

I signed the four sheets bearing the imprint of the Special Departmental Police of the General Government of Algeria. I was allowed to keep one copy for myself—this little document, the culmination of twenty-five years of newspaper work. I had covered revolutions and riots and wars, watched nations and governments through mazes of intrigue and crisis and had always taken the impersonal view of the observer, regardless of my own opinions. I had seen governments rise and fall and always managed to keep clear of the political buffoonry which sometimes masks as history; and above all, I had loved France for years and had sat at the end of a cable, as it were, trying to interpret her changing moods, like a doctor holding a patient's pulse, and I thought I understood my old friend, but there it was in black and white . . . "expulsion du territoire francais."

It was clear enough. Across the top of the page of this unimpressive-looking document was printed in big type, "Proces-Verbal de Notification." It was dated March 28, 1942,

and went on to state that at the request of the Prefect of Algeria, I was hereby notified of the decision of the Governor General to expel me from French territory, and that I must conform to this order within one month's time. The penalty for failure to comply with the order was stipulated as of six months to three years in jail.

The elderly French functionary, whom I had never seen before, appeared much concerned. He asked me point blank, "Do you know what you have done to cause this?" I told him I had done nothing in particular but that it probably concerned my political sentiments. He then asked me for my French identity papers, which all foreigners must carry who are permitted to reside in France or the colonies, and informed me that my "Proces-Verbal de Notification," would henceforth serve as identity material, should any policeman stop me. I might add that an order of expulsion is not always the best kind of identity paper, although valid until its date of expiration. I shook hands with the old man, and I walked out into the white sunlight with a strange and unwelcome feeling of being alien and unwanted.

The attempts of the Consulate to learn why I was expelled brought a formal letter from the Governor General saying that they had absolute proof that I was working for a third power, "une troisieme puissance." That could only mean England. And if that was so, no one would have been more surprised than England, I am sure.

For six weeks after my notification, I enjoyed life in Algiers as a free man. The authorities extended my expul-

sion paper for two more weeks because of the difficulties of obtaining Spanish and Portuguese transit visas, since I was to return to America via Lisbon, through Tangiers.

French friends gave me parties in honor of my expulsion and I learned how really enjoyable it is to be "persecuted." I showed a French officer my little expulsion order one day at a tea party and he showed it proudly about the room. To me he said, "You have been decorated. This little paper is indeed worth more these days than the Legion of Honor." Even so, I was not too proud of being expelled.

By the spring of 1942, the Vichy-German strategy began to emerge in all its horrible incongruity. Pierre Laval, who, in the summer before, had been the victim of a spectacular attempted assassination at Versailles, had recovered, but still carried a bullet near his heart. Finally, after lengthy negotiations between Petain, Darlan, Abetz, Hitler and others, on April 15, Laval was appointed French Fuehrer at Berlin's order; that is, he became Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Interior, Minister of Information, and Chief of the Vichy government, with Marshal Petain remaining Chief of State. This move was almost too much, even for collaborationists. Nothing that the Germans had done at Vichy, so far, was so ill advised as this. To the average Frenchman, regardless of his political sentiments, Laval was already a traitor. They knew the Marshal despised him, having already arrested him for conspiracy. And now to force the tottering old officer of Verdun to accept Laval

as the head of his own cabinet was just incredible. It was a perfect sample of the political acumen of the Germans.

When Laval's appointment was announced in the press, blandly and without shame, people in Algiers talked openly of revolt. The underground movement began fearlessly to show itself in the open. I was invited to a "tea" one afternoon at a French home. There was very little tea, but plenty of sedition. The house, which later, I suspect, became well known, was filled with officers and their wives and a few refugees of other nationalities, who discussed two subjects: the possible plans the United States might have for invasion, and when; and the possibilities of armed revolt in North Africa. Here was enough spirit, patriotism and courage for real war. The tragic note was that they lacked arms. Their usual observation was, "We can't fight tanks with rifles."

It was virtually on that day of April 15th, when Laval became "Fuehrer," that certain officers of the army and the air force started out on the search for a leader. An officer of the air force, who was close to the general staff, said to me, "We are sure of the young officers. Their spirit is wonderful. And there is no doubt about the troops. They are with us. But the great danger lies with certain officers *above* battalion commanders who are pro-Vichy, for obvious reasons, and whose authority could wreck everything. What we need, and what we are looking for, is a general whose orders will sweep right through this network of imbeciles who must obey the Marshal."

A French revolt was obviously difficult. To revolt and find themselves without arms and thereby without the sympathy of the people, meant immediate disaster. The heads of the movement would be arrested, disgraced, and either shot or imprisoned, making further underground work even more risky.

A prepared surrender to an Allied invasion would have been disastrous for both the French and the invaders, if the generals were not absolutely sure of their chances of success. Indeed, there should be no criticism of the way the French patriots behaved in North Africa. General Eisenhower's rapid investment later proved that French cooperation had done its utmost to pave the way. They could not overcome the fatuous stubbornness of certain Vichy commanders. Most of these were Britain-haters, moved by an incurable anxiety to see England defeated. Hence the stiff resistance at Casablanca and Oran.

One day I was walking along the Rue Michelet and an officer of the air force rushed up and grabbed my hand. I could see he was excited about something. "We have a general," he told me in a low voice. "He is ready to do anything, but we must not move alone, for we lack materiel. We have pledged our word not to repeat his name and, in fact, it is known to a very few—*very few*. We do not tell his name to other officers. We are going to forget it ourselves. We will be ready when the Americans come."

We dropped into a little café and took a table far to the back. The *patron* brought us two coffees, I noticed with real

sugar, not saccharine. He was very polite to us. "He's an Alsatian," the officer told me. "Come in here from now on and you will even get chocolate in the morning!"

It looked to me as if the underground was doing very well. Nothing works so snugly as good intrigue, when it works. The officer then told me that if the Germans should attempt to invade North Africa to forestall an American landing, the French patriots would organize back in the Atlas Mountains.

"We can do a guerrilla job there that would surprise the boche," the officer exclaimed. "Naturally, we should expect help from the Allies, for Morocco has a long Atlantic coast." He then told me of the extreme caution the officer group had to observe in keeping Vichyites out of their counsels. They moved slowly and checked every man with ingenious devices. They developed a technique by which nobody's name was used and no one ever said much beyond expressing their pro-Allied sentiments. There was a little war council but it was confined to a handful. Adherence to this organization was thereafter tacitly understood. This revolt psychology had no papers, no oaths of allegiance, no back-room speeches, no Danton, no Camille Desmoulins. Their three enemies in the order of immediate importance were: the stooges from Vichy, the Gestapo, and Germany.

In the weeks that followed, the "teas" became the directive centers of French military preparations. Although there were many active officers in the roster, few wore their uniforms at these social gatherings. Sometimes it would be a

tea, sometimes a dance. Few talked "business" when all were together. The wives and womenfolk were nearly always more outspoken than the men, as is usually the case in such circumstances. Sometimes you would see a little tightly folded document passed from one hand to another. My pals the detectives would have given plenty to grab these! The conversation, however, was cautiously general. They used even to taunt me a bit as an American about our "phony" war.

Some of the most ardent members of this preparedness movement, or underground, worked at a sort of radio listening post run by the Vichy government in Algiers which monitored all the propaganda and news broadcasts of practically every important country. They made an excellent professional analysis of these broadcasts, translated from many languages, and distributed them to a restricted, private list of only the most important officials. Only seventy copies were supposed to be printed of this bulletin, which was issued in a morning and evening edition, and it was formally prohibited that any editor or translator possess a copy or talk about the contents of the bulletin to outsiders.

This post was a hive of patriot Frenchmen who ingeniously contrived, despite their pledge of secrecy, to get information out where it would be of use. In spite of a rigid control, one copy of this well-edited bulletin found its way mysteriously to the Americans. I saw the actual news bulletin only twice, although I have read many interesting articles prepared from the bulletin by underground workers.

Those last nights in Algiers were tinged with a certain sadness. From the rue Michelet I used to walk up a steep hill to my hotel. It was the Chemin Edith Cavell. Underneath the name on the street sign were the explanatory words, "Victim and Martyr of Duty." Strangely enough, the name of this street, recalling the British heroine-nurse, shot by the Germans in the first world war, had never been changed by the Vichy regime. The Chemin Edith Cavell went up and up between apartment houses, old villas and high white walls. On moonlight nights the straight cypresses which brooded in clusters over Moorish walls, towered in motionless patches of heavy purple. The white walls were soft as ivory, and the road itself seemed to merge at the top into the luminous, azure sky swimming with big stars. Silver fronds of palm trees were outlined against balconies behind which good people had gone to sleep. The nights were always beautiful and no road seemed sweeter than this street of Nurse Cavell.

Night after night I had trudged up this road to the Djemila, smothered in purple flowered Bougainvillea and wondered when the war would come to Algiers, when these palms would be white, not with the lacquer of the soft moon, but with the dust of plaster and stone from villas and roads blasted and crumbled by German bombs. Between my window and the far, snowcapped mountains of Chrea, there was a wide fertile plain, an upland, shimmering with waving wheat and studded and sprinkled with every fruit and every bloom in nature's dower. I wondered when the

planes and the tanks would come to mangle it and suffocate the flowers with dust and yellow smoke. When the hot sirocco blew, I welcomed its warm caress, for it reminded me of the desert, the Sahara, a defiant, permanent, pervading hell more striking and more impressive than the belching fireworks of the little men who glorify war.

I left Algiers one hazy evening in May after a dinner at the clean little café Terminus, on the old public square with the palms and the bandstand. I had given away what clothes I could to friends who could get no more cloth. I had a few books and papers, a beret and a good overcoat which I could use, like the Arabs, for a burnous, for I would certainly need it on that trip through Morocco. I had said good-by to the Judge, and to all the others, and to the beautiful British lady spy, and to the police and to Ali, my little Arab protector, and to the journalists in the prix-fixe restaurant where they waited the coming of the Americans.

As the train slid out past the villas of Mustapha and the potato fields of Maison Carré, I kept thinking of the music I had heard in the modern Concert Hall of Pierre Bordes—Jacques Thibaud, old Alfred Cortot, and an incomparable pianiste, whom I had never heard of before, from the Conservatoire de Paris, Leila Gousseaud, a woman who certainly could don the mantle of Paderewski. Some of the culture of Paris had found a haven in Algiers. I seemed to be leaving a last lingering contact with old world civilization, for I knew that back home I would find an America plunging deeper and deeper into war.

The trip through Algeria, past the mountain gateway of Tlemcen, into Morocco is like going from one planet to another. The endless expanse of Africa seems composed of green worlds alternating with miles of majestic chaos. You arrive at Oudjda after what seems a ride on the moon.

In Morocco you note the difference between a "Protectorate" and a colonial department of France, such as Algeria. Oudjda was clean and spacious and its buildings were white and modern. An 'Arab boy took my suitcase at the station and I never saw it until I reached the hotel. You would not risk your baggage out of sight in Algiers during those last days of privation. There was already a different spirit in the air. People were not afraid of Vichy. After a year of that tense, ever-present idea of arrest, you feel like a prisoner on parole. In Morocco it is entirely different.

On three different trains I journeyed through to Taza, to Fez, the flowery capital of the Sultanate, to Meknes, surrounded by miles of grain, to Rabat, with its battlements and its residence of the Governor General, and finally to the sprawling, Spanish-European city of Casablanca on the rolling Atlantic. On these long relays I slept on the floor of the train corridor with my head on my suitcase and let people walk over me, like any Arab. The train service had been so reduced that the coaches were jammed with passengers. On the retreat from Paris I had made up my mind never to complain about travel accommodations. I was moving westward and that was enough.

In Morocco I had ample time to cogitate on the tremen-

dous wealth of these North African territories I had seen at different times. Let's take them, one at a time, looking at the economic maps issued by the former French government in Paris.

In Tunisia: The minerals include coal, iron, lead, zinc, phosphates and manganese. The native industries are leather goods, brassware, headgear, woolens, carpets and mattings, jewelry, pottery and ceramics, and silks. The phosphate deposits in Tunisia are among the richest in the world. There are olives, dates, fruits, wines and vegetables in profusion.

In Algeria: The underground wealth includes oil, iron, manganese, lead, phosphate, antimony, zinc, marble, chalk, mercury, sulphur and rocksalt. The native industries are embroidery, leather goods, brasswear, headgear, woolen cloth, carpets and mattings, jewelry, pottery and ceramics and silks. Agriculturally, you can grow almost anything in Algeria.

In Morocco: The minerals include oil, coal, copper, manganese, iron, tin, lead, antimony, phosphates and zinc. Native industries in Morocco are similar to those throughout North Africa. Riding on trains I saw herds of beef for the first time in months, and throughout those hundreds of miles of countryside, there was arable land enough to feed large armies. The land under cultivation was richly productive, as in Algeria and Tunisia. The flocks of sheep and horses and camels wander into countless miles of pasturage.

I have mentioned only the three colonies of French North

Africa. The ensemble of the continent of Africa is a new world of products in itself. There are fish and meat and oils to feed soldiers and civilians; cotton, wool and hides to clothe them. There are metals to smelt into bars and coal and hydro-electric power to fashion products into weapons and machinery. There is rubber growing in Liberia, and rare tough woods in the Congo for planes and gunstocks, medicinal plants and exotic fruits, and many tribes of men only too anxious to work. There are phosphates and salts and sulphur for explosives, and inexhaustible supplies of phosphates for fertilizer. There are gold and precious stones and domestic animals by the millions. There are infant shipping industries and only the first spurs of a continental railroad system which could provide the life arteries of a great continent from South to North, from East to West. In Africa there is a world to exploit and a mighty civilization to make more secure.

The tourists interest in Africa covers the range of our historic age. I am thinking of Egypt, Leptis Magna, Djerba (island of the Lotus Eaters) Carthage, Timgad, El Golea in the Sahara, Algiers, Fez, Marrakech, and Casablanca.

For future air transport, in French North Africa alone there are more than seventy-five officially indicated air fields, from the South Tunisian desert to Mogador on the Atlantic. Many new airports have been built since the war, so that already, Africa is a network of airlines—the sky railroads are ready.

Victory in Tunisia should assure the complete consolida-

tion of this mighty African continent as a far greater fortress than Hitler's vaunted stronghold of Europe. If this war is going to be long, and it will be, Africa is the springboard for Europe and the halfway station to Japan that will save us shipping from America. It must be developed and built up and kept safe from attack by the Axis.

My long ride to Casablanca made it doubly clear to me why the Germans wanted Morocco. In Casablanca I saw the German Commission in their American cars, speeding back and forth to their big hotel at Anfa. They wanted badly this fair world on the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, where Atlas held up the globe and where the golden apples grow in the still blooming gardens of the Hesperides.

I sailed out of Casablanca for Lisbon on a little Portuguese coastal ship, comfortably installed in Third Class. The boat was full of Britishers who had been in French concentration camps in Morocco. Even the none too tidy third class dining room was a delight. There was butter, big dishes of it on the tables, and there was that wonderful Portuguese coffee, all we wanted, and sugar in bowls. We had meat and fish and white bread. No private millionaire's yacht could have carried a happier crowd than that oily, ill-smelling, overloaded Portuguese ship which two days later sailed up the Tagus to prosperous and hospitable Lisbon.

Chapter Twenty-One

War and Politics as Usual

“HERE in North Africa, Frenchmen are likely to become excited and flare up in a temper. You must not mind that. They quiet down and things soon return to normal. You see, it’s the sun . . . C’est le soleil qui tappe sur la tete.”

General Weygand one day, not long after my arrival in Algiers, described the Frenchmen in North Africa to me in these words. We were in his diminutive office in the Winter Palace that day, well protected from the blazing sun. The general’s eyes had brightened in an amused smile as he revealed his theory about the African sun tapping the heads of the Frenchmen. In trying to break down the obsolete and worn-out bureaucracy of pre-war administrations of Algeria, I know the general must have run afoul of some excited Frenchmen. But he had got things done and, as he said at that time, things soon returned to normal.

Back in America, when I read of General Eisenhower’s acceptance of Admiral Darlan as High Commissioner for French North and West Africa, immediately following the American landing, I was surprised, but not horrified, as

were many of my fellow Americans. Again, those watchful and sensitive Liberals, the outraged Communists, the indignant Leftists, the Radicals, the anti-Nazis, the Friends of Freedom and, in fact, it seemed to me, the Friends of Everything, rushed into the breach to save the world. They began by denouncing Darlan, deploring Eisenhower, and literally abusing the American Minister to North Africa, Robert Murphy. A campaign ran through the American press for several weeks which was designed, in effect, to unload all responsibility on Murphy for the American recognition of collaborationist Darlan, the man of Vichy who had ordered Frenchmen to fire on Americans, who had promulgated anti-Jewish decrees and who had been the sidekick of men like Laval, Petain and Abetz! It began to look, indeed, as if the sun were also tapping a few heads in America.

For here in America our critical and maybe sunstruck Liberals seemed to forget that there was a war going on in Africa, and that the first job was to beat the Germans, the second job was to get along with the civilian population in the area in which we had to fight.

With respect to Robert Murphy, former Chargé d'Affaires at Paris and Vichy, and later Minister to French North Africa, who helped draw up the terms of the armistice for Darlan to sign, it must be remembered that he (Murphy) was not a Minister Plenipotentiary. Everything he did must bear the approval of the State Department, and, if I know Murphy, it certainly did. The criticism of this hardworking, fast-moving diplomat seems farfetched. I have seen few

diplomats more conscientious than Murphy, and none better liked in their post. Murphy certainly knew French officialdom and enjoyed the respect of both factions swarming about Vichy.

When I was in Algiers, seeing little opportunities to help those whom I call the pro-French Frenchmen, I used occasionally to become vexed by the unbending, legal attitude adopted by our Consulates. Murphy maintained a severely correct deportment. If there was a busy information service humming all around him, he kept clear of any involvement himself. My newspaperman's depredations into side-door detective drama were not encouraged by Murphy, and our relations were strictly, and respectively, correspondent and diplomat. At the Consulate they called him *The Dynamo*, and they also called him plain "Bob." He is a man of splendid physical stature, far over six feet in height, blond, agile as a panther and rarely without a winning smile, a good mask for a diplomat. I knew Murphy was a Roman Catholic and went to church, like most good Americans of whatever creed they profess, but I never heard him described by those who knew him well as a Fascist, such as some of the leftists charged after he (reportedly) advised Eisenhower to deal with Darlan—and you know we newspapermen hear all the gossip.

The Darlan episode, however, was fated to have its own tragic conclusion in the assassination that soon followed. Darlan dead was still an enigma.

To put it bluntly: in view of the extraordinary circum-

stances, I believe that Eisenhower and Murphy did remarkably well in consolidating the political situation in North Africa. First of all, we should realize that we cannot deal with French North Africa in terms of America, or Europe, nor as a pure democracy conjured out of our hopes and ideals. In North Africa, there is a complicated administrative system, which even in "peace times" is both civil and military. It governs at least two distinctly different races and populations which in some regions are still hostile, though in most of the territories they are friendly.

The Americans and British did not go into French North Africa as conquerors, even if they did have to fight their way in. They went as liberators. Therefore, as a liberator, you do not impose "your" government on the people. That is one of the watchwords of our democracy. General Eisenhower was even fortunate to find the so-called traitor and collaborationist, Admiral Darlan, in Algiers.

Darlan represented the Vichy government, which, regardless of the French National Committee in London, was still recognized by Washington as the de facto government of France. Although there was a large section of French North Africa hostile to Vichy and friendly to us, the majority of the administrative jobs in North Africa were held by Vichyites and were—not entirely but in the majority—loyal to Petain and Darlan. There were many who would have obeyed Petain and Darlan but not Laval. There were many who were so-called Vichyites, but who were not pro-German. There were many who were lukewarm to Anglo-

American intervention, but whose sentiments were easily swayed by propaganda, or by the simple example of a chief, such as Darlan.

There were many officials in North Africa glad to see an American intervention if it was accomplished powerfully and with some show of observing the legal proprieties. Coming in the guise of a liberator, the rank and file of the population, disarmed and disorganized as they were, could not be counted on as a stable element to deal with. To General Eisenhower and to American Minister Murphy, I presume only the standing, legal government of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, could be counted on for the immediate purposes of intervention. Had it not been Darlan, it would have been a governor-general, or a prefect, or the military administrator of a territory, who might have become High Commissioner in North Africa. But in any case, it would have been a Vichy appointee and therefore a servant of Vichy—a collaborator, if you will.

In the case of Darlan, obviously, it was his name, his record, his past, and his known acts, which outraged liberal opinion, and I can see that concern was justifiable. Despite the fact that Darlan immediately repudiated Vichy and explained he had governed there only at the point of a German gun, there was ample reason for the average American to question Eisenhower's choice. But there was no reason to explode half-cocked in the American press and continue to revile the leaders in Africa, once it could be seen that tactical matters were still predominant. That situ-

ation necessarily had to be the one transcending all else. The invading Anglo-American force had to anticipate an immediate war in Tunisia against entrenched Germans and Italians. They had to race to Tunisia, since Germans and Italians were also racing there. Serious trouble with the civilian population in North Africa would have been disastrous. That alone could have defeated our armies, plunging us into a colonial war, and a civil war, as well as the world war for which we came. There was also the dark possibility of a German cut-off through Spain, into the Moroccan Rif, a territory which could shut the gate against Gibraltar from the inside.

It was a time for quick decisions. The population in general was friendly, as it had always been. There was a strong officer personnel ready to fight with us against Germany and Vichy, but the command at Oran and at Casablanca was obdurate.

Admiral Darlan was ostensibly in Algiers to see his son who was ill in a hospital. Even so, the Admiral's reasons for being there do not matter. He was there. His repudiation of Vichy was not forced on him. He surrendered and used the authority of his name and his position to end hostilities against us and swing the vast territories of North Africa to our side. It made the defection away from Vichy one hundred per cent. Those Frenchmen who originally intended to revolt and go with the Americans came to our side automatically; those who had been undecided were left no alternative. Darlan had been appointed "admiral for

life" of the French fleet. There is no doubt that as Minister of Defense, which title he retained in the cabinet, his orders carried a certain authority with military and naval outposts. Moreover, his clashes with Laval had become more frequent. Darlan in Algiers seized his opportunity to even up scores with that perverse traitor, Laval.

There were two other problems of the highest military importance. Both these would have to have been solved before North Africa could have been consolidated. One was the French Navy. The other was French West Africa, including Dakar. As supreme chief of the French Navy, Admiral Darlan ordered it to our side. That would have been a tough nut to crack any other way.

French West Africa, with the landing base of Dakar, was also ordered by Darlan to join under Eisenhower. Governor General Boisson could do nothing else but obey his chief, even if it were Darlan of Vichy. French West Africa had been packed with Vichy officials and its naval units had been injected with the anti-British virus ever since the abortive attack by British and de Gaullist naval forces in 1940. The Germans had done all they could with propaganda, although General Boisson was no weakling, either before Germans or the Vichyites or anyone else. He was believed friendly to Americans, but he had a strong touch of that officer-loyalty in him, which made him look to Petain.

It would have cost General Eisenhower a large scale campaign to subdue West Africa had it held out like Casablanca. Dakar is at least 1500 miles from Algiers. An

overland campaign would have meant crossing the Sahara back of the Spanish territory of Rio d'Oro. A naval expedition against West Africa down the Atlantic coast would have meant a dangerous lunge at Dakar from the sea. The British could have squeezed in at the south from Gambie, but it would have taken troops and ships and planes away from the concentration in Tunisia.

With General Boisson's capitulation, our intervention required only a symbolic American battalion or so. They went in not as conquerors, but as representatives of the forces of liberation, and quietly moved to barracks and are there now, I trust, as allies in good repute. I don't believe military history has many examples of the investment of foreign territory, with its civil and military administrations, so quickly accomplished and over such a vast area as the Anglo-American intervention in French North Africa. Despite the secret agreement made with a French General and others by our General Mark W. Clark, the expedition was necessarily planned against "enemy" territory. The real enemy was located and dealt with when the Anglo-American forces reached Tunis.

Further evidence that the Anglo-American political tactics had been successful in North Africa is shown in the splendid cooperation given by the half-armed, but wholly enthusiastic French North African armies under General Giraud. The cooperation of this French Army before the salient of Medjez el Bab was happily one of the brilliant tactical features of the Tunisian campaign. It gave new hope to

the French nation and a new ideal for a people who had almost succumbed to the moral suffocation deliberately and scientifically enforced by Germany. In Tunisia, with General Giraud's repudiation of Vichy and the restoration of the Third Republic, France became a living, vital and essential ally, and a significant and powerful member of the United Nations.

You can see, nevertheless, that it is not easy to induce a people to go to war. People have asked me why we had to deal with such collaborationists as Darlan, Peyrouton, Nogues and Boisson, and even Giraud in the early days of intervention. Their names became ill-sounding symbols in the muddle of misunderstanding which signalized the negotiations between Generals Giraud, de Gaulle and Catroux. It has been asked, why did the French fire on us? Why did the French not have an insurgent organization all ready to jump into the war with the Americans? Did they not know that the United States, at least, was the guarantor of their eventual liberty and the restoration of their empire? Did they not know the American people were their friends?

The answer is distinctly, "No." The mutual understanding and sympathy between Americans and Frenchmen is almost axiomatic, it has become a tradition, but we are not automatically, blindly, come-what-may, military allies. Frenchmen had never lost their fundamental confidence in the United States as a probable friend in need, but they knew our weaknesses, as they knew those of other friendly nations, and they have a long experience in the knowledge

of how nations go to war, either for themselves or because of their treaty commitments. In the first world war, we entered the conflict only in the third year and not to save France but to save ourselves along with France and the Allies. It fell in nicely with the legend of Lafayette. American intervention did probably save France, just as the French army probably saved Great Britain from making a compromise peace with the Kaiser.

In the second world war, Germany was too powerful to be staved off and France went down, unfortunately with Mussolini's Italy on her back. None can deny that France learned a bitter lesson. Help from America, in the Lend-Lease arrangement, was organized only in time to go to Britain and while America was still preparing. And even then there had been nothing actual or implied in our relations with France that would guarantee the Americans as an eventual ally. And there was, in fact, in America a powerful isolationist group which was especially articulate and its voice was heard and respected in Europe.

Back of the Munich mess was a long line of shattered illusions regarding America's boast to make the world safe for democracy. The Allies had won the first world war, but America had backed out of the peace and, some said, repudiated its responsibilities toward world security. This is no time and no place to air those charges. But I can point to some acts which would make France, or any other country, cynical and suspicious of outside help.

Immediately after the Versailles treaty, France was almost

universally condemned for its harsh policy toward Germany. Neither Britain nor America had much sympathy with France's attempts to keep Germany disarmed. But France still had some strong men. That tough, hard-headed, gray-bearded lawyer, Poincaré, *Tête de Lorraine*, they called him, broke with England's Prime Minister, Bonar Law, and sent an army of occupation into the Ruhr, five years after Germany had stubbornly resisted full reparations payments. There was little sympathy for France when her horizon-blue troops marched into Essen.

I remember the looks of sour surprise on the faces of those factory workers who lined the streets. They had been told they had won the war and that by some freak of dirty politics, an unfair treaty (Versailles) had been signed. I saw the French military railroadmen manning the trains, their faces black with coal dust. Certain American newspapers charged France with using "black troops" to cow the Germans as an uncalled-for humiliation.

As a French army moved into Duesseldorf, which was the seat of the banker-industrialist resistance, the United States chose that time to withdraw the American army of occupation from our Rhine bridgehead at Coblenz. When the American flag was hauled down from the Castle of Ehrenbreitstein, the Germans interpreted it as a sign of our disapproval of French occupation. It might have been a coincidence, since we did not intend to occupy the Rhine indefinitely, but the withdrawal might have been more appropriately timed.

Later, at the second conference of the Hague, when France and Britain were locked in a bitter quarrel to obtain some adjustment of the Eastern European reparations, when the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Snowden, was snapping off his thin-lipped epithets against France, calling the French Finance Minister "grotesque," the United States chose that time to sign a separate treaty of peace with Germany.

The Germans were delighted, so much so that, although the terms of the treaty were still in the secret stage, a Berlin delegate showed me just that paragraph of the treaty which stipulated that the United States asked no guarantees as to the execution of the treaty except Germany's own good will! I forget the exact wording, but it is in the treaty. That was our own substitute for the Versailles Treaty, the result of our war against Germany and its allies, to make the world safe for democracy. And that was the beginning of a series of concessions toward Germany which finally brought the Nazis face to face with us in Tunisia and in the Mediterranean, where, may Allah be praised, the French and their excellent colonial infantry were at our sides.

So what was the political result of our intervention in North Africa? The French people were back in the war as a nation, and the prospect of victory was that much nearer through this vast continent of Africa. Moreover, we had kept our word and offered France the opportunity of choosing her own government. If she did it wisely or rashly, the risk was not great on the one hand, nor dangerous on

the other. The important domestic political development was that on April 14, General Giraud made a fighting speech denouncing the Germans for what they are, and repudiating the tie with Vichy. The Third Republic was hailed again as the still legitimate form of France's government until the people should choose to retain it or change it. The Nazi-Vichy decrees were annulled outside of France. General Giraud then opened the way with soldierly gallantry to General de Gaulle and to General Catroux.

The subsequent clash of personalities seemed almost like the old France, again in the saddle. But this time clashing ideas and formulas of government, provisional or otherwise, did not interfere with the main issue, as they did in the France of 1939. The French under de Gaulle, under Catroux, under Giraud, under Leclerc, fought splendidly as one man, one France, for one goal—liberty.

Giraud was criticized for tolerating Marcel Peyrouton in the governor generalship of Algeria. Prior to being Ambassador to Argentina, Peyrouton had occupied that unenviable post at Vichy of Minister of Interior. As a prominent French publicist told me later in New York, "Peyrouton was the Minister of Interior who arrested Laval. You can call him a collaborationist if you want, but he had some virtue in that he, like certain other of the collaborationists, did not really collaborate as was expected of them. To be Minister of Interior in France, you cannot have the heart of an angel."

Under Giraud, the much-criticized Peyrouton ordered reinstated in their jobs all anti-collaborationists who had

been dismissed by Vichy. And once more, I must remind myself lest I grow violently critical of weather-cocks like Peyrouton that we are obliged to let France choose its own government and to judge its men rather by their present conduct than by their past services to Petain. It is unlikely that we shall be called upon to venerate a Laval or a renegade like Paul Marion, Vichy's former Minister of Information.

In the estimates we form of French leaders subsequently chosen, it is perhaps wiser not to condemn them so much because they worked for Vichy, but to judge them as we judge our own politicians, that is, on their own records both past and present. There were many who worked for Vichy, in France and in the colonies, but who gave it only their lip service. Moreover, we can depend on the French themselves to have listed with fair accuracy the names of the militant, pro-German collaborationists. There is not one of that insufferable small fry who made life unbearable in North Africa who is not known and well labeled. I am sure their lives henceforth will not be happy ones.

But for the principals such as General Nogues or General Boisson, the case is complicated and difficult. Nogues was believed anti-British and at one time not unfriendly toward Americans. Vichy distrusted him and the French National Committee in London frankly talked too loudly against him. Nogues certainly was not enjoined to the United Nations' cause by de Gaulle's insistence that he be dismissed. When Nogues became alarmed at de Gaulle's

dislike for him, he is said to have gone to the Sultan Sidi Mohammed, with whom he was on very friendly terms, and to have told him that the French in London were out to remove him. The Sultan is reported to have offered General Nogues his own elite guard to protect his life, and other troops (it is uncertain which ones) to fight off British attackers. You can see that when Nogues was ordered to fire on an Anglo-American assault landing he obeyed with a certain vindictive pleasure.

General Nogues, always impeccably uniformed and be-ribboned, had a way with the Sultan. Nogues' reputation as a general was not outstanding, but his ability as a courtier, gentleman and companion to the Sultan won him a staunch friend at Fez, the religious capital of Morocco. Nogues' palace at Rabat thereby became his impregnable fortress as Resident General of the Protectorate. And when the tie with Vichy was broken by Giraud, General Nogues officially broadcast his full praise for the restoration of the Republic (Morocco Radio, March 17).

The case of General Boisson, Governor General of French West Africa, seemed somewhat less obscure than that of Nogues. Boisson had long been a so-called collaborator, but it was easy to collaborate more than 2,000 miles from Vichy. Boisson is a badly wounded veteran of the first world war. His wounds made him no lover of Germany. In 1940 the British tried unsuccessfully to take Dakar. It was one of those gaffs that did not improve relations with the French people and it provided, as well, the usual fodder for Goebbels

to use in fanning the flames of hatred of England. If the British attacked Dakar on the advice of General de Gaulle, you can see why de Gaulle and Boisson might not be pals.

Both Vichy and the Germans, being always apprehensive of American attacks on Dakar, kept up a running propaganda broadside to French West Africa. It was fortified anew and heavily manned with troops, but Boisson would not stand for the presence of Germans. Our own American Consul Wasson maintained a thorough and constant watch on the infiltration of Germans and he concluded that a German menace did not exist. Wasson's report to Washington was released for newspaper publication by the State Department and it revealed General Boisson as friendly and cooperative toward Americans. In any case, Boisson immediately acceded to Darlan's request to surrender, so his collaborationist tie with Vichy could not have been too strong.

In the formation of a provisional government in North Africa, the issues were often personal rather than political. I have reason to suspect that General Giraud, being a French General, is inclined like most military men, toward the right, even the extreme right. In abrogating Vichy's anti-semitic laws, he also failed to restore the special rights accorded to native Jews under the Cremieux decree of 1870. Giraud thereby placed the native Algerian Jews on a footing with the dominant 7,000,000 Arab population of Algeria. Native Jews and Arabs again have the same rights and privileges regarding French citizenship. Giraud claims this

was done in fairness to the Arabs whose military help France needs and whose sympathies might be alienated by special laws favoring the native Jews.

Looking at it coldly, there would seem to be some justice in that conclusion. However, there has been sharp criticism of Giraud in America for this act. And here again we might be reminded that the governments of our allies are not run to please us, but to please themselves. We run our own government the same way, or at least, we are supposed to. According to an official French Atlas, in a recent census, there were 98,000 native Jews, 6,201,000 Arabs, and 858,000 Europeans in Algeria, so the native Jewish problem should not attain the importance of a major issue. I realize it is a matter of principle and precedent that is involved, but it should be the French government's problem, as the administrative authority. Our role in this matter should certainly not extend beyond that of friend and observer, or perhaps of advisor, if our advice is asked. I have often thought how wonderful it would be in this world if each nation would be somewhat more inclined to mind its own business.

At this point it seems *à propos* to recall a special statement on the North African situation, contained in a letter by Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles to Professor Ralph Barton Perry of Harvard University. The letter was published during the Tunisian campaign. Mr. Welles said in part:

“Criticisms of the government's North African policy must be viewed in the light of certain further considerations.

First, we must bear in mind that they concern one aspect of a major military operation. This operation has already achieved great success. We may confidently expect that it will, before long, succeed in its ultimate objective—to expel Axis forces from the continent of Africa and thus open the way for an invasion of Southern Europe.”

Mr. Welles then went on to explain: “Our wartime policy has two purposes which override all others. First, we must do all we can to win absolute victory as quickly as possible, with the least possible loss of life. I believe that our North African policy saved the lives of many American boys and of many North African soldiers and civilians.

“Secondly, we must work to establish a just and lasting peace. I believe that it is important in the interests of lasting peace that the French people should be free, under their own republican laws, to choose their government after the Nazis have been driven out of France. Until that day, I hope, French forces will fight side by side in harmony against the common enemy. These are our stated policies, and they are also the stated policies of General de Gaulle and General Giraud.”

Chapter Twenty-two

The War to Come

EARLY in 1943, writers, educators and statesmen were already actively concerned about our plans for the post-war world. Some books were wholly dedicated to the subject while many which dealt with the international picture betrayed in one way or other the authors' apprehensions that we might make the same mistakes after this war that we made after the first world war. Our own Vice President Wallace was well out on a limb about helping the needy peoples of other nations, and even such a staunch Republican as Wendell Willkie has sounded a high call to universal brotherhood in his excellent book, *One World*. Although some of these earnestly proposed Utopias were obviously premature, appearing as they did, right in the midst of a brutal world conflict, they contained many ideas which were thoroughly sound. Certainly no project for peace and social harmony after this war should be ignored. In this darkened world where scientific destruction now employs so many millions of men, the words of anyone who thinks and speaks for freedom and sanity should be considered and studied. The central theme of most of these post-war projects has concerned controlled world security

in a framework of the Atlantic Charter, the famous Four Freedoms.

All of this strikes me as being both noble and praiseworthy, but we must still keep our feet on the earth. I have tried to point out that victory is possible to us through Africa, but not because of our African victory alone. Now that the Axis have been defeated in Africa, the war must go on through Europe, through Asia and India and in the Pacific. Inasmuch as Africa becomes our first continental base in the Eastern Hemisphere, it thus completes the first stage in the strategic plan. Africa must be the base of operations for clearing the Mediterranean of the Axis marauders in Sicily, Sardinia, Southern Italy, and Crete. Africa must open the quicker routes to the Near East, to Russia, to India and thus uniting our own effort in the Pacific with that in Europe. From the East Coast of Africa and from Madagascar, the guns must point toward those scheming savages from Tokyo. Africa must not only guarantee the route through Suez, it must be a springboard for the Pacific as well as for the Mediterranean.

In all this you can see that we have a long war ahead, days, weeks, months, some years of continuous and wonderful battle. I say wonderful, not to glorify war, but to exalt the spiritual compact which the free men of many nations have made among themselves to fight on in order to prevent the world from slipping back to slavery. In that they have faith, for liberty gives its soldiers a dazzling armor. And I believe if we carry out this task with force and dignity and the

grim determination to win, we shall have already gone a long way toward preparing the stage for practical post-war settlements. Meanwhile, perhaps it is better to concentrate on the world of today, which is involved with so much conflict and future struggle that it seems we of this year are still in a pre-war phase.

First of all, in order to avoid another world war we should inform ourselves of the reasons which caused the present one. Our troops in Africa, in the Mediterranean and in the assault boats overseas, should know what they are fighting for and should expect and demand a peace commensurate with their sacrifices. The men of Tunisia who felt the sting of defeat at Casserine Pass and who thrilled with victory at Mateur should know that peace is not to be the prey of politicians and that the future security of the nation is not to be a Congressional rag doll for wrangling partisan leaders.

And so there are some definite pre-war ideals to instill in our soldiers, there are some ideals for our national leaders and ideals for the public, all of which must antedate victory. We must assume that we are not so much fighting a general world war, as we are fighting a war to preserve our own existence, all that we are and possess. The day has come for solid convictions. Americans have a stern task to fulfill. In Europe and in Asia, as well as in Africa, we must first make ourselves worthy of our allies and we must work constantly to enjoin the respect of the populations we encounter in the fight for liberation.

We must learn and relearn, until it becomes an accepted principle of conduct that there is no strength comparable to that which commands respect from others. As men and women, and as a nation, we should understand that a strong man rarely has to fight, and that he is seldom attacked. The relations between countries follow the same general rules as the relations between individuals. We should know that the best way to make a friend is to be a friend. That goes for all peoples with whom we are fighting, irrespective of color or race. We should not ask ourselves like spoiled children, "Why don't people like us?" We should get out our little mirrors of self-analysis and ask rather, "What is the matter with us?" That should be one of the guiding principles of our relations with other American republics.

I am inclined to believe that it is not nearly as important to have a hatful of post-war ideals as to develop the conviction that we must never again be caught unarmed. So long as we live in a world even partially populated by organized savages such as the Japs, the Nazis and the Fascists, we must be more than ever their match in battle and in such a way that they will know it in advance. Disarming the Axis must come, but we must keep well armed ourselves—now, and in the future. If we disarm Germany completely, she will only find a new secret way to build more and better weapons. Germans are so innately proud of their caveman culture.

I should not even be interested in prescribing democracy for the Axis nations after this war. Let them attain democ-

racy by their own efforts. If Germany wants a Nazi government, if Italy prefers its Fascism, let them have such systems. Suppose Germany and Italy still are incapable of governing themselves as intelligent free men. Military defeats may cause political upheavals in Germany and Italy so that the people may turn one way or another, right or left. It happened after the last war, and it can happen again. We can offer to help them, certainly, but a cautious policy of not too much interference should be followed. Regardless of the form of government these enemy nations adopt, their leaders should never again dare publicly to describe us and our friends as "degenerate democracies." Our strength as a nation should preclude any future insolence of this sort.

This policy will cost us money, but we cannot measure lives and security in terms of a limited defense budget. We have already tried that and with lamentable results. Let Congress howl if it wants. And meanwhile the American public should remember that it has a duty to perform, and that duty is never to relax its vigilance over its legislators, as it has certainly in the past. One could hope that the men who go to Washington might be the intellectual equal of the people they represent, but it seldom seems to work out that way.

Let me illustrate this with some grim facts regarding this present world war. To begin with, this war is a present to us from ourselves. It could have been avoided, and I hardly need to reiterate now that we paved the way for the second world war by throwing away the peace and repudiating our

obligations after the first world war. It is a sad thought, but it is true, that to more than 78,000 American dead who now lie in Romagne, in Belleau Wood, in Arlington and elsewhere, we failed shamefully in a sacred trust. We forgot even the words of our own great Lincoln at Gettysburg though we had carved them in stone and molded them in bronze.

In recent years it was the duty of our foreign correspondents, our diplomats and our educators to warn the American people—and there were warnings aplenty. But during those last years, all such talk was unwelcome. It was like shouting at the wind. America was too engulfed in heedless comfort and preferred mass ignorance of what was going on in the world. Her leaders were so preoccupied with politics that statesmanship was forgotten. We ignored and underestimated the growing threat to our lives. Now most of us, though not all of us, understand. We know with a sharp and shocking realism that this is a time when there is only one thing to do. The proof of our patriotism and of our sanity is shown in the fact that we are doing it.

In 1919, the United States, which had assumed a splendid moral leadership in a then free world, was drawn away from the councils of men and nations by the malicious intolerance and the political vengeance of a group of Senators called the Irreconcilables. They had to repudiate the work of Woodrow Wilson at the Paris Peace Conference, even if it wrecked the entire nation. The less ado about them the better. We quickly retired from victory. We at-

tended nicely to the American graves in those beautiful cemeteries in France but we forgot the sacrifices of our dead. In fact, things like that bored us. Then followed the most disgraceful epoch in our history. We set a horrible example for the world.

We could not expect Great Britain or France to behave any better politically than we did, although they had become the leaders in the new world peace organization at Geneva, the League of Nations. So they too played shabby roles while the gangster nations of Germany, Italy and Japan rearmed and robbed and raped their way into a carefully organized second world war. It is not a pretty picture—disarmament, prohibition, false prosperity and the ultimate crash!

I sometimes wonder if in the 1920's we could have had the political stature to play our role in a League of Nations. With the painful lessons of the last few years, we certainly should have that stature by now. For awhile we were key-hole peepers at Geneva, but the minute they opened the door to us, we fled. There was plenty of time to stop Japan, plenty of time to catch Hitler and ample time to have barked at Mussolini. When Japan first invaded Manchuria, lying to the world with her habitual brazenness, we were asked to sit on the Council of the League of Nations as a guest, having vital interests in Far Eastern affairs.

The United States, great and powerful republic that it was, allowed its consul at Geneva, the late Prentiss Gilbert, to sit on the Council for just one brief session. Japan immediately protested and we ran like a lot of frightened

monkeys. Washington yielded. The proffered council chair thereafter was always empty.

In that crucial time in world affairs, the League of Nations Council held its next session in the palace of the French Foreign office on the Quai d'Orsay. Again the United States was invited to attend. President Hoover sent General Dawes, the American Ambassador to the Court of St. James, to Paris for this historic occasion. It was a great moment. The French Premier, Aristide Briand, broke a standing rule of the government and gave me a brief interview as United Press correspondent, which made some banner headlines in the American newspapers. Briand said that at this stage in history the United States was in a position to save the peace of the world. And what happened?

There was still an empty chair at the Council table; General Dawes stayed in his rooms at the Hotel Ritz reading telegrams from Hoover; the Japanese went further into Manchuria and lied even more brazenly than before; and the peace of the world was not saved. I will say for the honor of the League of Nations that subsequently Japan was forced to resign to save what face it had left. From then on the gangsters contemptuously defied the League, and its great authority slumped tragically as Germany and Italy and Japan swashbuckled about with no one to stop them.

The days of our pathetic indifference, I hope, are over. When a child burns its finger on a hot stove, it usually doesn't go back again. The child learns a method which the psychologists call selective inhibition. In our principal

international relations we were not as bright as children nor even as cautious. But on the day of Pearl Harbor we awoke from a slumbrous adolescence; we awoke with a jolt. On that day we embarked in an "all-out" war.

When I returned from North Africa, more than six months after Pearl Harbor, I had no doubt that we were committed to a total war against the Axis, and I saw America with fresh eyes. Abroad I had seen totalitarian Germany crush one democracy after another, because they too, like us, had been engaged almost wholly in deplorable partisan politics. Unhappily I saw at the same time that we also were still being torn by conflicting trends. Our national war effort was unified but our citizens seemed dangerously grouped into at least four main categories, not all likely to pull together for war.

There were first of all those who hated England, although England had virtually saved our necks when we ourselves were not prepared to fight a victorious Germany and its satellites. Next were those whose partisan hatred was so intense that they seemed to regard with deep regret even the slightest accomplishment of the Roosevelt administration. And there were those whose most fervent hope was to plunge America into Communism. The fourth group was that unenlightened segment of society in more or less influential positions who would deny labor its very birthright and hamstring freedom in a new brand of American Fascism. The intense propaganda for an all-out war effort, and the growing sacrifices of the average American family,

seem gradually to be breaking down the baneful influences of these groups. But months after Pearl Harbor and its eye-opening disaster, as I write this book, we still have not reached sufficient national cohesiveness as a people to warrant our planning to plaster a post-war world with what we call our Democracy. The clear altruism of the Atlantic Charter cannot be denied and it is certainly something for peoples to work toward, but a journalist's close observation of the world and the pervading memory of past history makes me skeptical of too much Utopia; that is, I am frankly skeptical of the "blessings of mankind" variety. Let us be helpful always, let us be generous to a fault, but let us look well to ourselves first, before we march forth with bands and banners to reform our brothers.

Here in the United States there is some complex Americana on which we must earnestly labor so that we can distinguish between what is good and what is pure hokum. I should say that the elements which contain the most potential good and the most potential evil in shaping our lives are: the press, the cinema, the radio, advertising, our politics and our prejudices. Hercules had twelve labors, but we have only six, so it looks as if the world might be advancing.

As I look back on Africa, I am convinced that there is no place where our post-war projects could be more helpful, but we should be careful of making golden promises that we cannot fulfill. In the last war, many of us doubtlessly remember that we heard these same "post-war" arguments. We were going to make the world safe for Democracy.

There was much talk of the "self-determination of nations." And there was as much sincerity about it then as there is today in the same analogous talk of setting up an Atlantic Charter. Moreover, many of today's post-war projects call for a kind of Parliament of Nations to police the world.

But why overlook the fact that we already have such an organization and that we set it up after the last war. We all helped (America as well) to erect a permanent shining marble palace, the League of Nations. It still stands there on the green shores of a placid lake in one of the most peaceful places on earth. The various commissions of the League of Nations have already performed incalculable service toward establishing order in many branches of human activity: public health, child welfare, control of narcotics, codification of laws, international communication, and other services stimulating good will among men. Because Germany, Japan and Italy quit the League, is all the more reason why it must have been useful. That the League did not reform the world and abolish war in its first few years of existence is no reason to condemn it.

The League of Nations is still there, still a functioning organization of nations. We must not forget that it was a vital part of our "post-war" ideals of the last war. It was the bulwark of Woodrow Wilson's hopes, and of the hopes of our Democracy, in the last war. When American soldiers laid down their lives in the Argonne, at Belleau Wood, at Chateau Thierry, they had already heard of this dream of peace for a post-war world.

The spacious halls of the League are there, beckoning to men to come back. The vast press room, now empty, is all ready to send out its uncensored reports to the world. The rostrum of the assembly of this majestic world parliament, set up to make a world free and safe for Democracy, can resume its labor and its hope undaunted in making the world safe and habitable and decent under the four freedoms of the Atlantic Charter.

I firmly believe and I commend this thought to all, that the League of Nations at Geneva is the rational and logical repository for our post-war ideals.

But as sweet and alluring as it is to discuss the ways of peace, it is better to keep our feet on the ground today and look to Africa. Our armies have won the battle for that mighty continent. The Americans, the British, the French and their allies have crushed, killed, captured and routed the Axis forces in the Tunisian headland. The victory in Africa and the Mediterranean paves the way for multiple assaults on Hitler's vaunted Fortress of Europe. The war must go on over grim lengths of time. From now on Africa will be the springboard and the mother continent for victory—victory in Europe, victory in Asia and ultimate victory, triumph and peace in the Pacific.

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Victory through Africa.

